ISABINDA

OF

BELLEFIELD.

A

SENTIMENTAL NOVEL:

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS.

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BY MRS. COURTNEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE following ſheets are ſubmitted to the candour of an indulgent Public, by a Female, — "alike to fortune as to fame unknown." — Pecuniary motives were not the reaſon for her undertaking this Work: living as ſhe has done for ſome time paſt, very retired, ſhe took up the pen, in order to diverſify thoſe ſolitary hours which uſed to be moſtly occupied by her needle and book.

Friendleſs and unprotected, ſhe ventures forth into the world, without trying to win the critic's ſmile, or averting his frown; but, conſcious of many glaring

glaring faults, which muſt be found in a firſt production, unreviſed and uncorrected, ſhe humbly implores his clemency; and entreats him not to think (becauſe ſhe has made a faint attempt at laſhing vice and folly), that her ſatire is perſonal, as ſhe can aſſure him, her characters are all fictitious.

ISABINDA

LETTER I.

LEONORA FENBROOK TO ISABINDA ASHTON.

REGARDFUL of the voice of friendſhip, I loſe not a moment in obeying my deareſt Iſabinda's laſt requeſt. I ſtill ſee the ſilent tear trickle down that blooming cheek, obſerve the ſigh, which was in vain endeavoured to be ſuppreſſed, and hear in imagination the half broken accents, that at laſt burſt forth—"Write to me, my dear Leonora," you cried, "the inſtant you can." You waved your hand, unable to ſay more; and the chaiſe immediately ſetting off, tranſported me with rapidity from that friendly manſion, where I had enjoyed for a few ſhort months, a calm repoſe, unruffled happineſs, and quiet ſerenity, in the ſocial converſe of your worthy mother, your aunt Danvers, and your ſtill dearer ſelf, that I fear, I very much fear, will not be my lot again for ſome time. Perhaps I have bid adieu to contentment, and Iſabinda, for ever. Oh, my friend, my better ſelf, as I often call you, how happy have we been? how did each day, nay, every hour, glide away in rational delight? We had not indeed recourſe to what the world calls faſhionable amuſements—Cards, ſcandal, and all the extravagance of dreſs, were baniſhed our ſociety. A few well choſen friends ſupplied the place of thoſe brilliant circles, where little but deceit and detraction reign: muſic, painting, drawing, work, and Mrs. Aſhton's excellent library, when not diſpoſed for paſtimes out of doors, filled up each vacant moment, and left no blank in time. I have often viewed you in your white muſlin gown, ſtraw hat, and blue ribbons, with greater admiration

than I ever did any of our moſt faſhionable Dutcheſſes in their Court dreſſes. So true is the obſervation, that beauty always appears to the greateſt advantage when leaſt ornamented.—What a dreadful reverſe ſhall I now find? how much reaſon have I to regret leaving Bellefield—enchanting ſpot, ſacred to wiſdom and friendſhip—muſt I quit you for folly and diſſipation? You know Lady Morgan's character too well; cards, dreſs, paint, and every fooliſh foppery, which this metropolis ſo much abounds in, engages all her hours; while Sir John, who in his turn is a very faſhionable huſband, paſſes moſt of his nights in riſking ſuch ſums of money at the gaming table, as I fear will one time or other prove fatal to himſelf and family. Such is the ſituation in which Providence has placed me almoſt from my infancy; ſurely my ever to be revered father muſt have had very different thoughts of my uncle from what he really is, or he would not have left his only child to *his* guardianſhip. My mother, I have always been told, was a pattern to her ſex; my father doated on her, and, I ſuppoſe, fondly thought her brother muſt be a partaker of ſuch excellence; and as he had no very near relations of his own, left me in his care; but, alas! Sir John Morgan has not one trait in his character that reſembles Mrs. Fenbrook. Such were the thoughts, which I was entirely loſt in, when the chaiſe ſtopping, I found myſelf in Harley-ſtreet, divided one hundred miles from my dear Iſabinda. It was quite dark, as you may imagine, when I arrived; as I entered the hall, I perceived it lighted up, and was not without hopes, that my uncle and aunt had been kind enough to ſtay at home, in expectation of me, but I was quite miſtaken; for being met by honeſt Williams, Sir John's butler, he informed me that his lady was from home, and was not expected back till betwixt one and two in the morning; "but my uncle," ſaid I, "Mr. Williams,

Williams, am I not to ſee him to night, is he in the library?" Williams ſhook his head; "my maſter," replied he, "Miſs, did not dine at home to-day, and will not return till his uſual hour; pray walk into the parlour, and I will bring you ſome refreſhment, prepared on purpoſe for you after your journey." I did as he deſired, and after I had taken it, ſaid, I wiſhed to retire to my own apartment; where I will endeavour to forget even you, if poſſible, in the ſoft arms of ſleep; but is it not ſtrange, my dear, that no one ſhould be at home to receive me, when they themſelves fixed the day of my return, by the footman, which they ſent to attend me up? I am ſure my couſin Letitia, had ſhe not received her mother's commands to the contrary, would not have been ſo remiſs; different, very different, have I always found her, from Lady Morgan, or indeed, my uncle himſelf. Good night, my deareſt Iſabinda, good night.

LETTER II.

ISABINDA ASHTON TO LEONORA FENBROOK.

THE anxiety of parting from my deareſt friend, is in ſome meaſure relieved by hearing of her ſafe arrival in Harley-ſtreet. Oh, My Leonora! how greatly am I obliged to you for ſo early an intelligence, while I was doubtful of any accident having befallen you; how much did I ſuffer! how did each hour roll heavily along, till John this morning brought me your letter; we were at breakfaſt when it came; my mother ſmiled when ſhe ſaw it, and ſaid, "Well, Iſabinda, my love, I

hope you will now be yourſelf again; I have not known my child theſe two days." "Excuſe, my dear madam," replied I, "the tribute I have paid to friendſhip; Leonora and I were never ſeparated from the hour of our births till the death of Mr. Fenbrook, and I have often heard you ſay, the hearts that are united in childhood, form an attachment much ſtronger than at any other period." "Read your letter, my dear," ſaid my aunt Danvers, "and leave that point to be diſcuſſed betwixt my ſiſter and you another time."

I read it aloud; my mother ſeemed greatly hurt at the negligence of Lady Morgan on your arrival. "Indeed, ſiſter," ſaid my aunt, "Lady Morgan would have departed very much from her true character had ſhe done otherwiſe. During Mr. Danvers's life, as you yourſelf know, we lived in the ſame village with her mother. Heireſs to a very great fortune, and bred up with the higheſt notions by Mrs. Mordaunt, ſhe always ſeemed to look down on every one with contempt that was not dignified with the title of Your Ladyſhip; and I am very certain neither Sir John's connections—his perſon—nor his fortune, large as it was when he married her, could have prevailed, if the being a baronet had not been tacked to them." "But ſurely," replied my mother, "her huſband's niece might expect to have ſome claim to her civility, at leaſt; I cannot indeed imagine how it is poſſible for her to withhold her affection from ſo accompliſhed and engaging a young woman as Miſs Fenbrook, after having had her an inmate in her houſe theſe ſix years." "You do not know Lady Morgan ſo well as I do," returned my aunt, and ſhook her head. "But the worſt part of the ſtory, my dear mama," ſaid I, "is Sir John's deep play; how miſerable will it make me ſhould he have it in his power to hurt my ſweet friend!" My mother heſitated; at laſt, "I do not ſee, Iſabinda, how that is poſſible, as Mr. and Mrs.

Mrs. Fenbrook were our near neighbours at Springwood, before either Leonora or you were born, and the dear departed Eliza and I contracted a mutual regard; I am no ſtranger to the merit and good ſenſe of the man ſhe was united to; and though he certainly was overſeen as to the character of Sir John Morgan; yet that more than parental love (if there is a poſſibility of ſuch a thing)," ſaid my worthy mother (looking at me with the greateſt tenderneſs), "which, as Leonora was chiefly under my care after the death of her mother, I have often been a witneſs of, muſt have dictated to Mr. Fenbrook, when he made his will, and you may aſſure yourſelf he has not left a daughter with ſixty thouſand pounds to her fortune (which is the leaſt your friend will have) under the guardianſhip of his wife's brother, without binding him down as faſt as poſſible. Lady Morgan's behaviour to her, indeed—" "aye," interrupted my good aunt, "there's the rub; Leonora has an openneſs of diſpoſition that I am fearful will not always accommodate itſelf to the youthful airs of that old coquette." And yet," ſaid my mother, "as Miſs Fenbrook has now entered into her twenty-firſt year, I think it will not be ſo hard a taſk: a few months will put her into poſſeſſion of her fortune, and ſhe need not then court the protection of Lady Morgan." "A few months!" returned my aunt, "I am ſure I ſhould be ſo diſguſted with her in a few days, that it would not be in my power to bear her. The only way old age can expect to draw an affection from youth is good nature, and a proper chearfulneſs; but when ſixty puts on the attire and livelineſs which is proper at twenty, how low, how very ridiculous, muſt they appear in the eyes of all the world; I cannot ſay, however," continued ſhe, "though I have long been ſick of the very thoughts of Lady Morgan, but I wiſh very much for Miſs Fenbrook's next letter; we

ſhall then have an account of her reception, and I dare ſay I ſhall have my character ſtrongly delineated; for I inſiſt upon it, Iſabinda, that you read every word aloud. Adieu, my dear friend, may every good attend you.

LETTER III.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

I HERE ſend you quite a packet, Mrs. Danvers being deſirous to know every word which paſſed on my reception. I will give you the firſt breakfaſt ſcene, my Iſabinda, without the leaſt omiſſion, having been fortunate enough to get this evening to myſelf. Lady Morgan and Letitia are gone to Lady Sarah Lander's rout, and I have, though with great difficulty, got excuſed, under pretext, that being juſt arrived, I was not prepared to make my appearance, which, as I was three or four times at the D*** aſſembly, while at your houſe, was, I muſt own, a little mental reſervation; for I could certainly have equipped myſelf *au dernier gout*, as I did thoſe happy evenings when with you there; but to my ſtory. When Betty came into my room in the morning, I aſked her if the breakfaſt hour continued to be the ſame as as it was before we left Harley-ſtreet. The poor girl lifted up her hands, "La, madam," ſays ſhe, "it is hardly poſſible to give a direct anſwer to any thing here; it is all confuſion below; how different is the management at this houſe, to what it was at that good lady's, Mrs. Aſhton's!" "I did not aſk you

you any thing about that, Betty," ſaid I very gravely, "I only want to be informed at what time Lady Morgan riſes." "By what I can find, Madam," replied Betty, "through my lady's woman, Mrs. Johnſon, the breakfaſt-time is much the ſame it uſed to be when we were here before. She deſired me to aſk you if you did not chuſe a cup of chocolate, as her lady is never called before eleven, and it is pretty near twelve every morning before ſhe goes into the breakfaſt-room." I told her ſhe might bring ſome as ſoon as I was dreſſed; and had but juſt drank it and diſmiſſed Betty, when ſomebody tapped at my door; it was Letitia; ſhe ſprung into my arms: "Welcome, welcome, my dear Leonora," ſaid ſhe, "I have thought it an age ſince you left us; how glad am I that you are returned; how did you leave the family at Bellefield? have you been well?" In ſhort, the affectionate creature went on aſking me a hundred queſtions, without giving me time to reply to one: at laſt ſhe ſtopped, being quite out of breath, and after I had ſatisfied her inquiries, we entered into a converſation, which fully convinced me the ſweet girl's friendſhip is rather augmented than diminiſhed by abſence. At length the bell rung, and ſhe ſaid, "I muſt leave you, my dear, that is to inform me Johnſon is gone into mama's room, and I would not have my mother know we have been ſo long together, adieu; we ſhall meet again by and by." Away ſhe ran; and in about half an hour Mrs. Johnſon came, with a great many cringes and curtſies, to let me know that breakfaſt was ready. So, thought I, I ſuppoſe Lady Morgan is in tolerable humour this morning, or her Abigail would not be ſo civil. Down I went; upon opening the room door, I found Lady Morgan at the head of the table, Letitia making tea, and my uncle, with a newſpaper in his hand, directly oppoſite his beloved ſpouſe. I made my

compliments firſt to my aunt, which ſhe returned with a ſlight inclination of her head; when I turned to my uncle, he juſt took his eyes off the newſpaper, "How do you, Nora," ſaid he, and went on reading immediately; Letitia ſmiled, and pointing to the vacant place, "There's a ſeat for you, my dear." "So, Miſs Fenbrook, you are returned I ſee," ſaid Lady Morgan, as ſoon as I was ſeated, "I hope you are not quite ruſticated." "There is no danger of that, ma'am," ſaid I, "the ſociety of Mrs. Aſhton and Mrs. Danvers muſt be an improvement in elegance to every one they favour with an invitation." "Upon my word," ſaid Lady Morgan, "I know very little of Mrs. Aſhton; but as to Mrs. Danvers, who I unfortunately know a great deal of, I never ſaw any thing particular to remark in her, but a great ſpirit and a vaſt ſhare of pride; I remember her ſaying, when we were neighbours, before I married, that ſhe ſhould not have given place to my mother at the parties where we met, if ſhe had not done it out of reſpect to her years, though my mother's great great uncle was brother to an earl by marriage" "Brother to a fiddleſtick," ſaid my uncle, throwing down the newſpaper on the table, "I do wiſh, Lady Morgan, you would not talk in this fooliſh manner before company, as you very often do; upon my ſoul it makes you appear very ridiculous." "Aye, very well, it does not ſignify, Sir John, there is ſomething very agreeable in being related to quality, which Mrs Danvers never was; though I remember very well the airs ſhe uſed to give herſelf when I was but a girl." "Not ſuch a baby, neither," replied Sir John, "let me ſee, Danvers married two years before me, and brought his wife into your neighbourhood; I was ſix and twenty the year I married you, and you know, Lady Morgan, you are two years and better older than me, therefore you muſt have been near ſeven and twenty when you firſt became

became acquainted with Mrs. Danvers, and that is no ſuch baby. As I know you are very curious, and I have a little time this morning, I will tell you a few anecdotes concerning the family, Nora has been with. Priſcilla Watſon, now Mrs. Danvers and Amanda Watſon, now Mrs. Aſhton, are of an ancient and exceeding good family, though not related to nobility. Amanda was, perhaps if you come to ſymmetry of features, more beautiful than her ſiſter; but Priſcilla, now Mrs. Danvers, (laying a great emphaſis upon your aunt's name) was every thing a man could deſire." "I am ſurpriſed then," ſaid Lady Morgan, if ſhe was ſuch a charming creature, you did not think of making your addreſſes to her yourſelf; but perhaps you are going to make it out that you was refuſed by her, and I have taken up with her leavings." "No ſuch matter, child," replied Sir John, ſtaring her full in the face; beautiful as they both were, they would not have done for me; the Miſs Watſons had but ſix thouſand pounds a-piece: they lived together, after the death of their parents, at Richmond, where Mr. Danvers firſt became acquainted with Priſcilla, and fell violently in love with her; he was numbers of years older than her, but a man of very large fortune, which you know, Lady Morgan," looking earneſtly at her again, "hides many defects; and ſhe accepted of him. His eſtate, which was four thouſand a year, was three parts of it entailed upon Harry Stanton, his nephew, in caſe he died without children; he therefore ſettled the remaining thouſand a year on Priſcilla, and dying without heirs of his own, has bequeathed Mrs. Danvers's jointure, at her death, to my friend Harry too." "And ſo that woman has a thouſand a year jointure;" ſaid Lady Morgan, "as you are ſo good at hiſtory, Sir John, pray relate Mrs. Aſhton's adventures to me; I ſuppoſe you will make her out to have a great jointure, as

well as her ſiſter." "By no means," replied my uncle, "Mrs. Aſhton married for love, and they were obliged to wait for the death of an uncle of Aſhton's, who left him five hundred a year; that joined to his great abilities as a counſellor (for he was called to the bar), enabled him to live like a gentleman, purchaſe Bellefield, and die worth a thouſand a year, beſides the ſix thouſand pounds he had with his wife. He left Mrs. Aſhton five hundred a year for her life, and the houſe at Bellefield as her jointure houſe; ſix thouſand pounds to Iſabinda Aſhton, when ſhe comes of age, and the intereſt of three of it during her minority: and his ſon, Charles Aſhton, an officer, who is at preſent abroad, five hundred a year, and the remainder of every thing, after the death of Mrs. Aſhton."—But a great knock at the door announces the arrival of Lady Morgan; I muſt therefore finiſh to-morrow morning.

LEONORA in continuation.

I RESUME my pen: ſo then, ſaid Lady Morgan, toſſing her head, "this all accompliſhed, enchanting Iſabinda Aſhton, as I ſuppoſe you will ſay ſhe is, after the death of her mother and aunt, muſt be obliged to live upon the intereſt of ſix thouſand pounds." I know nothing of Iſabinda's perſon," replied my uncle, "as I have not ſeen her ſince I went to fetch Nora from Bellefield, after the death of her father. She was then a fine girl, about fourteen; I think, niece, ſhe and you were born the ſame day:" "Yes, Sir," ſaid I, "there is but a few hours difference in our ages." "Enchanting ſhe may be in her appearance, and I doubt

I doubt not but ſhe is ſo, as her mother and aunt were both ſo handſome," reſumed Sir John; "but this I can aſſure you, Lady Morgan, ſhe has, to my knowledge, every accompliſhment that it is poſſible for a young woman to have, as ſhe has not only been taught every thing, but has had the beſt maſters that could be procured to teach her. The town of D——, which is as large as any market town in England, being but four miles of Bellefield, and a great many of the very top maſters having fixt there. As not only in itſelf, are there ſo many polite families to be found, but the vicinity is crouded with baronets, and the ſeats likewiſe of people of the greateſt fortune, without being allied to nobility." "I am glad of it," ſaid Lady Morgan, "I have no ill-will to the girl, though I diſlike her malevolent aunt ſo much. What, I ſuppoſe, Nora, ſhe is a little modeſt, down-caſt looking girl, that bluſhes if any body ſpeaks to her; I don't ſee indeed how ſhe can be otherwiſe, with all the accompliſhments Sir John is pleaſed to give, as I ſuppoſe ſhe never was ten miles from Bellefield in her life: ſo then the ſiſters club their jointures together to make a ſhew—ha, ha, ha; I ſuppoſe Mrs. Danvers keeps the carriage." It was now my turn to ſpeak—"I do not really know,' I replied, "what your Ladyſhip means by the word juſt now made uſe of; the arrangement of Mrs. Aſhton's family is perfectly genteel in every reſpect; the houſe large and handſomely furniſhed; the pleaſure-grounds about it delightful." "That they are," ſaid my uncle, "and there is not either carriages, ſaddle-horſes, or any thing elſe wanting," reſumed I, "to furniſh out the proper etiquette of the times: it all goes in Mrs. Aſhton's name, and Mrs. Danvers, who is a moſt chearful, agreeable, well-bred, and ſenſible woman, calls herſelf her viſitor; though as ſhe very often laughing ſays, it is a viſit that will only end with the death of

one

one of them. As to my dear Iſabinda, madam," ſaid I, " though ſhe perhaps has never been more than twenty miles from Bellefield in her life, ſhe has always kept the beſt of company, as they viſit moſt of the families about them, and it is impoſſible for any body to acquit themſelves with more eaſe and true politeneſs." So ended the converſation.

LETTER IV.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

THANKS to you, a thouſand thanks, dear Leonora for your laſt letter, it has entertained us all exceedingly; my aunt Danvers particularly, was delighted at many paſſages in it. When I had finiſhed, and we had each delivered our ſentiments; " there is one thing however" ſaid my aunt, " I am very ſorry Sir John did not enlarge upon, as he was in a humour ſo exceedingly advantageous to me, (or rather in ſuch a contradictory one to Lady Morgan,) I do wiſh he had expatiated a little upon our ages, (that is us old folks I mean,) it is pity he did not, as her ladyſhip leads the dance there I am ſure; for I am two years younger than Sir John, and you know ſiſter I am three years older than you, of courſe I am four years younger than Lady Morgan, (though ſhe was quite a child when I married,) and ſhe has ſeven years the advantage of you in ſeniority," 'I wonder what is become of George Morgan, ſaid my mother, I do not find Miſs F——makes any mention of him in her letter, I ſhould ſuppoſe, (as Lady Morgan ſays,)

ſays,) he muſt be leaving the univerſity, (if not left it by this time) as he muſt now be turned of nineteen, for he is a year older than his ſiſter Letitia." "Yes," replied my aunt laughing, "that I ſuppoſe is the reaſon, his mother miſtakes her autumn, for her prime; ſhe was turned of forty when her ſon was born, and a year older when ſhe produced her daughter, and having very fortunately buried all the elder children, is in hopes the world will think theſe two came directly after her marriage, and that ſhe has had none ſince." I hope, ſaid I to my aunt, "if he is under the ſame roof with my much loved friend, that he is as amiable as Leonora deſcribes his ſiſter to be, it will make her ſome amends for the coolneſs of her uncle and aunt's behaviour to her." "He promiſed, replied Mrs. Danvers, "to be every thing the moſt affectionate parents could wiſh when he went to Oxford, and three years, at his time of life, can have made no alteration, but for the better, provided his morals remain uncorrupted." "It is a ſtrange thing in my mind," continued my aunt, that as Sir John has for ſome years paſt indulged himſelf in ſo deſtructive a vice, (for I muſt call it one,) as gaming, he did not bring up his ſon to ſome profeſſion; he will perhaps poor young man be a baronet, by and by, with hardly a ſixpenny piece in his pocket; for as the bulk of Sir John's fortune came from an uncle, it was not entailed, and the abſence of the four aces may very likely occaſion a ſeparation betwixt his ſon and the eſtates: now as he could have been brought up to the church, the army, the navy, or the law,"—"oh do not, dear ſiſter, do not," interrupted my mother, "name the army," and ſhe ſighed bitterly, "conſider what I ſuffer in the abſence of my dear Charles; month after month has now elapſed, and no tidings of him, how can I tell whether I am at this time

bleſt

bleſt with a ſon or not?" "But why ſhould you anticipate evil?" replied my aunt. "I do not ſiſter, heaven is my judge," returned my dear mother, "I do not, providence is certainly over us every where, but yet I hope the fond, the tender feelings of a parent may be forgiven; not a line arrives, and he at ſuch a diſtance too; perhaps a fever is at this time ſcorching him up, or he is ſhivering with an ague, from the unwholeſome damps; which too often ſurround the military marches, where then, where could be found the friendly hand which would adminiſter comfort to him, like an affectionate mother!" "My deareſt love" ſaid my aunt, "I never knew you ſo much in the wrong in all my life, your ſon moſt likely has long time before this reached the place the regiment is to be ſtationed in. You ought, inſtead of repining as you do, to be thankful that theſe peaceful times ſubject him not to the chance of war; and the greater the diſtance the leſs likelihood you know, my dear, you have of hearing from him," "It is very true," replied my mother, "but yet I wiſh, moſt truly do I wiſh, he had not choſe a military life. Two long years muſt intervene before I can ſee my ſon; perhaps it may never be my lot again; beſides I have many objections to the army; even when captain Aſhton is at home; it is a very bad profeſſion for a young man of four and twenty, that has the warmth of temper, ſtrong ſenſibility, and gaiety of diſpoſition he has." "You forget, however," ſaid my aunt, "that above one quarter of the two years already is elapſed, keep up your ſpirits, the reſt will run off quickly, and I ſincerely hope every thing will turn out well."—Juſt as ſhe had ended her ſpeech my mother was called away; as ſoon as ſhe had left the room, my aunt turned to me, and ſeeing me wipe my eyes, for I could not help ſhedding tears, at the thoughts of my brother's abſence; "my dear Iſabinda," ſaid ſhe,

"I am

"I am ſorry to ſee the uncommon ſoftneſs which attends you; believe me, my love, you muſt have trials in life, and you ſhould ſtrive to conquer it." Adieu, may *you* meet with none, my Leonora.

LETTER V.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

HAD it been in my power I ſhould certainly have given my Iſabinda ſome account of my couſin George Morgan, in my laſt; but the copiouſneſs of the ſubject I was upon had run my letter ſo far beyond the uſual limits, that I was determined not to tranſgreſs any further. I ſhall now haſten to ſatisfy Mrs. Aſhton's enquiries about him. Letitia had told me in the long converſation I mentioned, to have paſſed between us, that her brother was daily expected to fix his abode here, as he has quitted Oxford entirely, and has been for ſome time paſt in the country, at Major Waltham's, with whom he has contracted a very particular friendſhip, though the Major is ſeven or eight years older than himſelf: by what I can find, George's friend is a man of a very amiable character and agreeable perſon; his fortune though not large, enables him to make a very genteel appearance in life, he is much in the faſhionable world when in town, but loves retirement beſt; and has purchaſed a very good houſe, Letitia tells me (her brother ſays) about twenty miles from London, where he reſides three parts of the year, and only quits it during that period, when obliged by his profeſſion ſo to do. The beginning of March

March being the uſual time for his excurſion to this metropolis, Letitia thinks, he and her brother will make their appearance together. As the major always lodges at this part of the town, he will moſt likely be frequently of Lady Morgan's parties, for ſhe doats on a faſhionable beau, particularly if they keep their carriage (which he does); I have therefore been the more particular about him, that he may not be quite a ſtranger when he arrives; though, added Letitia, "he has hitherto viſited but little at our houſe, as my brother has always been at the Univerſity during the major's ſtay in town, and, indeed, as you know, never came home while at Oxford." She ſpeaks of her brother in raptures: "How delighted! how happy am I!" ſaid ſhe, in the thought of having you, my dear couſin, and my amiable George, to direct me in the right path, correct my little foibles, and inſtruct me to be an humble copy of both." Sweet innocent girl! oh, how unlike—but hold, my rebel tongue: I will as much as I can ſuppreſs the indignation which too often riſes in me, and will have uterance. We are at preſent upon a very civil footing; I will, as far as I am able, learn to be faſhionable, and conceal the want of affection, under a cloak of politeneſs; but ah, my uncle! could I but diſcover the leaſt ſpark of friendſhip in him I ſhould be ſatisfied; he is my mother's brother, and, with all his faults, I really have a very great regard for him. But I will turn to other ſubjects: I am truly ſorry to find your worthy mother is ſo uneaſy about her ſon; far be it from me to wiſh to pain my dear Iſabinda; no, I would do every thing in my power to alleviate each ſtroke her uncommon ſenſibility muſt be attacked with; but yet I fear, it is with concern I ſay it, I fear this ſilence of Captain Aſhton's will not turn out well. To be gone ſix months, and not once remember the moſt amiable mother and ſiſter in the world;

world; all is not right: I wiſh, with all my heart, I may not be too true a propheteſs; I truly value your brother, Iſabinda, for many amiable qualities I ſee in him; but indeed, my friend, you muſt not be offended if I ſay he is a very mixed character. He has his ſiſter's ſtrong ſenſibility, it is true, but there is not that uncommon ſoftneſs, that (what ſhall I ſay) that univerſal philanthropy, that attends her every action; his gaiety of diſpoſition, though it has often charmed, has terrified me too: and there is a warmth of temper, even upon the leaſt occaſion, that (excuſe me, my dear) I have often looked upon him with horror; his turn for diſſipation is, to my knowledge, much too great for his fortune; and his perſon ſo handſome, it muſt often expoſe him to temptation, that, with his turn of mind, he cannot reſiſt. Arm yourſelf therefore, oh, friend of my heart! arm yourſelf with fortitude, ſhould you receive any ill news concerning him; he cannot poſſibly help revering your moſt excellent mother, owning the good ſenſe of your worthy aunt, and adoring the extraordinary qualities of his lovely ſiſter; they muſt have aſcendance over him. Adieu.

LETTER VI.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

How miſerable have your laſt lines made me! Oh, my beloved friend! what ſhall I do? Inſtruct me how to act; in what way to adminiſter comfort to the beſt of mothers, ſhould your predictions, which I have too great reaſon to fear, prove

prove true, with regard to my dear, and moſt likely unfortunate brother. At preſent I know not the matter of facts; but the ſequel of this will too plainly ſhew, how much cauſe I have for the apprehenſions, the cruel apprehenſions, I am under concerning him. My mother and aunt were luckily not in the parlour when your letter arrived, which gave me time to peruſe it, before their return; I therefore, when I read it aloud, omitted every thing in it that related to my brother. It will kill my mother, indeed, Leonora, ſhould things turn out wrong with reſpect to him; it will be the death of her. We very ſoon after retired to dreſs for dinner; I made ſome excuſe to follow my aunt Danvers into her apartment, and gave her a ſign to diſmiſs her maid, which as ſoon as ſhe had done, I burſt into a flood of tears, and deſired her to look over the latter part of your letter. After ſhe had read it ſhe ſat ſilent a conſiderable time; at length, "Iſabinda," ſaid ſhe, "as you have often been an ear-witneſs of my endeavours to ſooth your much-loved mother's fears, in regard to Charles, you will perhaps be ſurpriſed when I confeſs to you that I have long been miſerable about him myſelf; he has, as Leonora ſays, many amiable qualities; but I fear his bad ones very much preponderate; "we muſt, however, my love," ſaid ſhe, tenderly preſſing my hand, "conceal, as much as poſſible, our thoughts of him from my ſiſter. Your friend has had many ways of getting intelligence of his behaviour, previous to his departure; he was frequently, you know, at Sir John Morgan's before Leonora paid her viſit here, he was alſo very intimate with Harry Stanton; which is not at all to his credit, I am ſure; and Harry almoſt lives in Harley-ſtreet, when not with his bottle companions. There are likewiſe two or three more I could name, from whom I am certain ſhe has received information of your brother.

All

All this, however," continued ſhe, ſighing, " I mind not half ſo much as her correſpondence with our neighbour Caroline Lucerne. Do not interrupt me, my dear," added ſhe, " for ſhe ſaw amazement ſit on every feature, you have not perhaps examined Mr. Lucerne's countenance ſo minutely as I have lately done. Charles has known, and reſpected him from a child; and as Lucerne is ten years older than my nephew, he was greatly under his tuition too, before he went into the army. Happy would it have been for him, as well as us all, had he remained ſtill in the ſociety of that amiable man; he doats upon your brother, Iſabinda, and they have always correſponded. I am convinced, by the melancholy which has lately been too viſible to me, there is ſome much more recent cauſe to be alarmed at, than any Leonora could have been acquainted with before he left England; that is, if," continued ſhe, " he is really gone." I ſtarted, and I am ſure, turned as pale as death. She went on without ſeeming to mind my agitation: " I am very certain, however, by your friend's manner of expreſſing herſelf, that ſhe is quite in the dark as to what has happened to him lately, but it is likely Lucerne may have dropt ſome expreſſions before his mother and ſiſter, which Caroline may have thrown out in oblique hints to Leonora. There is one thing, however, my ſweet Iſabinda, I have to comfort you with," for the tears had trickled down my cheeks during the whole time ſhe had been ſpeaking—" There is one thing that is a comfort to me," continued ſhe, I have ſtudied Charles's character with ſuch attention, that I think myſelf miſtreſs of it; and I have reaſon to flatter myſelf your friend's opinion with regard to his diſſipations hurting his fortune, will be found erroneous; for, notwithſtanding I dare to ſay, in the eye of the world, his volatile diſpoſition, and the appearance he makes,

makes, gives him the character of a very generous man, I can assure you he is quite the reverse, and conceals, under a mask of elegance, a very contracted turn of mind: he takes care to chuse his companions, more for their fortunes than their amiable qualities, and his attractions are such, that I make no doubt, they give the feast, which he partakes of without any expence, and in his turn tosses down the convivial glass, without a thought of the meanness he is guilty of, or the danger he exposes himself to by the excess." "But what can be done, my dear madam," said I, "to find out his present situation; we might perhaps, if known, alleviate the affliction you think Lucerne is in on his account." "I will tell you what we will do, my love," returned my aunt, "I will persuade your mother to take a ride to Cheryden in a day or two, she has long owed a visit to Sir James and Lady Arnel. We will get excused from going with her; and as soon as she is set off, you shall fetch Lucerne here, and I will get him to reveal your brother's situation to us. Adieu, my Leonora.

LETTER VII.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

I AM truly concerned to have given uneasiness to my sweet friend, but indeed Isabinda, it was become highly necessary to develope the dark side of your brother's character to you; you love him sincerely, and have hitherto been led by that regard,

gard, to think him all perfection. Mrs. Danvers is perfectly in the right as to her conjectures; I have received ſome ambiguous hints from Caroline, in her letters to me ſince I left Bellefield; but when I have preſſed for further explanation, her anſwer has always been, that ſhe was convinced her brother's melancholy *partly* aroſe from his fears for Captain Aſhton; but ſhe knew not his reaſon for them, as he always evaded the ſubject. The word *partly*, I muſt own, has forcibly ſtruck upon my fancy. I have often rallied you upon your conqueſt of Lucerne, which you have treated as a matter of jeſt; I have great reaſon, however, to think that your aunt's penetrating eyes will diſcover ſomething in the approaching interview with that truly amiable clergyman, which, ſuperior as her underſtanding is, has hitherto eſcaped her obſervation; if I am right, I tremble for him; good as he is, he cannot poſſibly indulge himſelf in a hope, it would be madneſs in him to aſpire to, a reciprocal regard from the lovely Iſabinda Aſhton. We are gaiety itſelf here; my couſin, George Morgan, ſurpriſed us to day, juſt as we were aſſembled at breakfaſt. My uncle and Lady Morgan received him with affection, it is true, but there was not the tenderneſs, the exquiſite pleaſure, that a ſtander-by might have expected from parents who had not ſeen ſo charming, ſo engaging a ſon, for three years, which, by the by, was very extraordinary. Sir John, it ſeems, thought his reſiding at home during his vacations would turn his mind from the ſtudies he wiſhed him to purſue at the Univerſity; he therefore laid a prohibition on George, at his departure, not to return to Harley-ſtreet till he quitted Oxford entirely, and at the ſame time gave him leave to go to Major Waltham's whenever he choſe it; perhaps my uncle thought the clearneſs of the country air, more conducive to genius than the foggy regions of this metropolis;

or, to ſpeak in a more rational manner, wiſhed to eſcape, as long as he could, the penetration of a ſon, who ſeems, in every reſpect, greatly ſuperior to his father. He entered the room with that pleaſure ſeated in his countenance, addreſſed my uncle and Lady Morgan, with that reſpectful tenderneſs, which minds like his are only capable of; ſeemed delighted at the ſight of his ſiſter; and paid his compliments to me, with that eaſy gentility, which ſhewed him to have mixed with the politeſt company, and ever attends the man of faſhion. As Letitia was on a viſit at Oxford for a few months laſt year, his appearance did not create the ſurpriſe in her, as was viſible in every face beſides. I never ſaw ſo great an improvement as three years has made in him; he is rather tall, exceedingly genteel; his face uncommonly expreſſive; his eyes dark hazel; and when he ſmiles, an uncommon ſweetneſs about his mouth; his complexion a clear brown, attended with that healthy colour, which is generally acquired by a reſidence in the country; he appears to be of a grave diſpoſition, and every action and look, has a remarkable ſoftneſs in them. He is upon the whole, if not the handſomeſt, the moſt agreeable man I ever ſaw. Lady Morgan having viewed him attentively for ſome time, and found his hair to be well dreſſed, his linen fine, and his cloaths faſhionably made, gave him a ſmile of approbation, and aſked him if his friend the major came to town with him; being anſwered in the affirmative, "Why did you not bring him here?" ſaid Sir John. "I ſhould not have thought of taking that liberty, Sir," replied Mr. Morgan, "till authoriſed by my mother or you." "Well," ſaid my uncle, "he cannot have any engagement ſo ſoon after his arrival; will he dine with us to day? I cannot pretend to ſay he will meet with any great entertainment from that old Cynic Hartley, who has invited himſelf,

ſelf, I think; he was a friend of your father's, Leonora; and as he never comes to town but upon buſineſs, and has not ſeen you ſince you was a girl, he wiſhes to be introduced to you before he returns into the country again: however, George, tell Major Waltham, Harry Stanton and Tom Varniſh will be here, and that will help the day off." "He cannot want any inducement, ſir," replied Mr. Morgan, "greater than what the preſent company affords, and I can anſwer for his waiting on you."

Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

THOUGH I have not received an anſwer to my laſt letter, my impatience is ſo great I cannot help addreſſing you a ſecond time, my ever valuable friend, to communicate the ſcene which has lately paſſed at Bellefield. My mother came very readily into my aunt's propoſal of a ride to Lady Arnel's yeſterday morning, but ſeemed a good deal ſurprized at each of us declining to attend her, called us a couple of lazy folks, and ſtept into the carriage; ſhe could hardly be got down the avenue, when I arrived at the little rivulet, (on the other ſide of the wood) which parts the village of Spring Wood from us, that being as you know the ſhorteſt way to the parſonage: what was my diſappointment when I got there, to find the drawbridge that was made for an intercourſe betwixt our two families, before my

my dear Leonora loſt her father, what I ſay was my diſappointment to find the bridge was not let down, as I ſuppoſe none of our ſervants had any occaſion to croſs it ſo early; however, luckily for me, one of the gardener's men was at work on the green bank which ſurrounds our wood, and imagining I was walking to the village, came to aſk me, "if I wiſhed to go over," being anſwered in the affirmative, he immediately unchained the bridge, which would have been paſt my capacity to have done; and I tript acroſs as faſt as poſſible. On my arrival at Lucerne's, my heart beat ſo, I could hardly utter a ſyllable, but I had the ſatisfaction of finding him at home: when I told him, my aunt wiſhed to ſee him directly, and that I was come to fetch him; he ſtarted and turned pale. "Any commands of Mrs. Danvers, and requeſt of my charming Miſs Aſhton," ſaid he, "will ever meet with the readieſt compliance and attention from me; but what can be the meaning, what is the reaſon of the meſſage ſhe now honours me with." "Lucerne," ſaid I, "do not waſte the time in enquiries, which will be fruitleſs, as I have it not in my power to anſwer them, but come this inſtant with me, and you will know from her own lips, what is the occaſion of it." He took his hat directly, but I obſerved a great deal of thoughtfulneſs in his looks, and a deep ſigh eſcaped him. I rather flew than ran all the way back, and he was obliged, though unwillingly, to keep pace with me. As I entered my aunt's dreſſing room, where ſhe had deſired me to bring him, for the greater privacy, I perceived that worthy woman had been in tears; my heart was full, but I ſat down with a determination to behave as well as I could. "How do you do, ſir?" ſaid my aunt, "we have not ſeen you for ſeveral days paſt, I hope you have not been prevented by indiſpoſition." "No Madam," ſtammered out Lucerne, agitated

ted to the greateſt degree, "I was coming, that is, I intended to wait on you ſoon, to tell you the news, which has ſet our little village in an uproar; Springwood Caſtle, formerly the ſeat of my ever to be revered friend Mr. Fenbrook, is ſold; after having in a manner, remained empty for almoſt four years, it will want a great many repairs: I am ſurpriſed the gentleman who purchaſed it of Sir John Morgan, did not reſide there oftner, I think he ſeldom came after the two firſt ſummers; however the Earl of Portſdown has been himſelf to ſee it; I am told he is charmed with the ſituation, which indeed, Madam, muſt appear very beautiful to a ſtranger, though at ſo early a ſeaſon, and I underſtand, madam, he has bought it of Mr. Dykes, and is to enter at Lady-day." All this was ſaid in that hurried manner, which is natural to every one who wiſhes to evade, by a trifling diſcourſe, more intereſting ſubjects. My aunt let him entirely finiſh what he had to ſay, when fixing her eyes ſtedfaſtly upon him, "Mr. Lucerne," ſaid ſhe, "as my niece I make no doubt has told you I wiſhed to ſpeak to you, and you ſee my ſiſter is abſent, you will excuſe my telling you all this news is quite foreign to the ſubject you are come upon; and I know," continued ſhe, you are convinced it is." Lucerne fixed his eyes upon the carpet, then looked up to the ceiling; pulled his glove off, then put it on again; while my aunt went on. "It is a very extraordinary thing that in ſo many months as my nephew has been abſent," (here Lucerne coloured as red as crimſon), "my ſiſter nor any of us ſhould ever have had a line to inform us of his welfare." Lucerne bowed, and was ſilent. "For my own part," ſaid ſhe, "I am really fearful his health may have been the occaſion of it." He bowed again, and was ſilent. "Sometimes," ſaid ſhe, with an agitation, which I could ſee ſhe ſtrove to ſuppreſs, "the dreadful thought occurs to me,

that he has been guilty of ſome diſreſpect to his worthy commander and friend, the Marquis of Rockſdale." Lucerne here fetched a deep ſigh, but was ſtill ſilent. "Nay, at other times," continued ſhe, "I am in a low ſpirited mood, I carry my fears ſo far, as to imagine he is ſtill in England." My aunt had ſcarcely pronounced the laſt words, when Lucerne ſtarted from his chair, walked faſt to the other end of the room, turned about, and reſumed his ſeat with the ſame quick pace he had left it, without offering to anſwer a word to any thing ſhe had ſaid. It was too much; I could not reſtrain myſelf in proper bounds any longer; I flew acroſs the room to him as ſoon as he was ſet down, and taking one of his hands in both mine, "For God's ſake, Lucerne," ſaid I, "keep us no longer in ſuſpence; pity my feelings, and do not, Oh, do not trifle with the horrors which at this moment oppreſs me! Death itſelf would be leſs terrible for me to hear of, than to remain in the uncertainty I am now in." "How amiable! how charming, my ſweet Miſs Aſhton," at laſt he replied (though with a voice that was ſcarce intelligible) does this tender attention for your brother appear in you! happy, happy Charles, to be the object of ſuch lovely ſolicitude!" "This," interrupted my aunt, "is ſtill evading the enquiries which we wiſh to make; upon my word, Lucerne, I ſhould not have thought you could have behaved in ſuch a manner to us." "For heaven's ſake, madam," ſaid Lucerne, "What would you have me do? Would you wiſh me to betray the confidence my friend has repoſed in me?" "Betray him, Lucerne," returned my aunt, "to whom can you betray him? Do you think that amiable girl there, whoſe tears ſpeak too truly for her? Do you think the agitation I am myſelf too viſibly in, gives us the appearance of enemies? Oh, rather think, that by confiding in us, you are doing the greateſt ſervice to

to your friend." "That is poſſible; but Mrs. Aſhton, madam," ſaid he, "ſhould I be prevailed on to diſcloſe the correſpondence I have lately had with Charles, Mrs. Aſhton muſt not be acquainted with it." "Nor ever ſhall," replied my aunt, "but in ſuch a manner as will thoroughly ſatisfy Mr. Lucerne and content Captain Aſhton." "Well, madam," returned he, after a long pauſe, "you have conquered; I cannot bear to be a witneſs of your anxiety; I cannot withſtand theſe tears," ſaid he, preſſing the hand which ſtill had hold of his, for I had not quitted him, "You ſhall be obeyed; but as the ſtory is long, and I am not certain whether it would be in my power to go through with it (for Charles is very dear to me, indeed he is) was I to attempt to relate it; I will, with your leave, defer it till the evening, when I will look up every letter I have received from him relative to the affair, together with my replies, and will bring them for your peruſal." "But Lucerne," ſaid I, "at leaſt anſwer me a queſtion or two; leave me not in this dreadful ſituation. Is my brother alive?" "Yes, moſt aſſuredly," replied he, "and well." "And in England," ſaid I, mournfully. "I wiſh, Miſs Aſhton," returned he, "I could anſwer this queſtion as ſatisfactorily as the other." "Then," ſaid my aunt, "my fears are too true; he is not gone abroad!" "He is not," ſaid Lucerne, "Madam, I am ſorry to ſay it." "Is Lord Rockſdale ſtill his friend?" interrupted I, "but I hardly dare to aſk the queſtion." "The Marquis of Rockſdale," returned Lucerne, "is the moſt amiable of men; he is ſtill the friend of Captain Aſhton; but, Iſabinda, you ſhall know all in a few hours. You will be pleaſed, madam, to return me the letters again," looking at my aunt, "when you have read them, unleſs, Miſs Aſhton, you wiſh to copy them, to ſatisfy your friend, Miſs Fenbrook, who, by my ſiſter's account, is

very anxious about poor Charles; and, though, Mrs. Danvers, I make no doubt but you will be very much hurt at the peruſal, let me beg of you to conſider, that with all his faults, Captain Aſhton does not want for ſenſibility, courage, and good-nature. Adieu, my dear, I ſhall ſend the packet ſoon.

Your letter is juſt arrived. Upon my word, Leonora, I am quite angry with you for perſiſting in ſuch an abſurdity. Lucerne's behaviour was ſuch, during his laſt trial, that had I not been convinced of the fallacy of your remarks, it would have quite ſatisfied my fears concerning him; and I am ſure had my aunt's penetration diſcovered any thing during that interview particular in him, I ſhould have heard of it directly, as we had a great deal of converſation together before my mother's return, after he took his leave. I muſt likewiſe reprove you, my dear, for another expreſſion in your letter; I eſteem Lucerne with the affection of a ſiſter; nay, even my own brother is not dearer to me; I have been uſed to his converſation, and been taught, even from my childhood, to admire his many amiable qualities; but love is by no means in the caſe; the heart, in that reſpect, will only ſubmit to its own election, and mine has hitherto been entirely remained untouched; but though that worthy man can never be any thing more to me than he is, I cannot bear it to be ſaid, that he is not to aſpire to me; ſurely the rector of Springwood, which is a very good living, beſides a genteel fortune of his own, may expect to be accepted by women much ſuperior, both in money and attractions, to Iſabinda Aſhton.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

I AM ſorry my deareſt Iſabinda is chagrined at what I have ſaid in relation to Lucerne; they are not vague conjectures, but have ariſen from obſervations, too accurate, to admit of the leaſt doubt of the reality of their ſubſiſtence: be that as it may; I ſhall only ſay further, that I wait with impatience for the promiſed packet, and reſume the detail I was obliged to break off ſo abruptly in my laſt. The party I mentioned aſſembled at dinner-time, with the addition of a Mr. Anſted, an elderly gentleman, uncle to Major Waltham, from whom the major has great expectations if he outlives him, as he moſt probably will. The uncle, a grave, ſenſible well-bred man; the nephew ſeeming to anſwer the deſcription Letitia gave him. There is a ſtriking and very agreeable contraſt betwixt the life and ſpirits of the major and his aſſociate; George Morgan's ſoftneſs and gravity; the one diverts you, while the other bewitches. Mr. Stanton and companion Varniſh are as great ſimpletons as ever, in their reſpective lines, of buck and coxcomb; but never was ſurpriſe equal to mine, as at the firſt view of Mr. Hartley; inſtead of a ſurly decrepid old man, which I had formed to myſelf, upon the ſervant's announcing his name, entered a moſt venerable reſpectable figure; though time has left ſome traces on his countenance of having been an inhabitant of this world for many years; yet the chearfulneſs, the hilarity, and exceſſive goodnature, that ſtill lightens up each feature, engages as I may ſay inſtantaneouſly, and leaves not a doubt of his not only having been very hand-

ſome formerly, but at this preſent time an amiable and good man. After he had paid his reſpects to my uncle and Lady Morgan, Sir John brought him up to me. "This," ſaid he, "is my niece, the young lady you are ſo deſirous to be introduced to." He ſurveyed me for ſome time without ſpeaking, ſeemed very much affected, his eyes gliſtened, and taking hold of my hand at laſt, ſaid, with great emotion, "Dear and lovely remains of the man I once doated on; excuſe the anxiety which is too viſible; every feature recals my valuable friend; ſuch was the vivacity of his eyes, ſuch the elegance of his form, and ſuch the bewitching ſmile which adorned your father; may your mental qualities equal his, and I can then venture to pronounce few women your ſuperiors." The ſcene was too awful; your lively gay Leonora felt it ſo, and turned away to hide the ſtarting tear. When I had a little recovered myſelf, my firſt thought was to watch what effect this ſpeech had upon my uncle; oh, Iſabinda! what was my concern to trace in his countenance every mark of anger and diſcontent: he approached the good old man with a contemptuous ſmile, which was too viſible, notwithſtanding the pains he took to turn what he was going to ſay into raillery; "Upon my ſoul, Hartley," cried he, ſlapping him on the ſhoulder, "you are quite in heroics; take care, my man, what you ſay; girls are apt to be vain, and Leonora will certainly think ſhe has got a Philander." "I am not at all ſurpriſed, Sir John," retorted Mr. Hartley, turning very quick towards my uncle, "at what you ſay; I know very well the man of feeling in the preſent age is entirely baniſhed the polite circles; but ſhort as my acquaintance has been with my young friend here, I can diſcover by her countenance ſhe has too much ſenſe to attribute the agitation ſhe has ſeen me in, to an improper cauſe." "Old people," ſaid he, looking very

earneſtly

earneſtly acroſs the room at Lady Morgan, who was at that time coquetting it with Mr. Varniſh, with all the youthful airs of fifteen, "old people, I ſay, muſt appear very ridiculous indeed when they aſſume the characters of either Corydon or Phillis." "Well ſaid, my venerable buck," cried Mr. Stanton, who is always my uncle's ſecond, "upon my ſoul you are very bright to day; notwithſtanding what you endeavour to advance, this young lady has inſpired you." "I am greatly obliged to you, Sir," replied Mr. Hartley, with a low bow, "for your compliment; if I am inſpired, I think, at leaſt, all the world will allow it is with an amiable object; and I am very certain it would never be acknowledged to be any merit in me, by men of ſenſe, was I indebted for the lucky flaſh to a dozen of claret, or as many flaſks of ſparkling Champagne." "'Pon honor," ſaid that monkey Varniſh, "I think, Harry, old Quiz is up with you there;" and leaving his ſeat by Lady Morgan, and advancing with a very affected air to me, "The joys of love," ſaid he, "are joys alone." "And pray, Miſs," ſaid Mr. Hartley, ſtaring hard at him, "what have you to do with love; faith, was I one of the fair ſex, I ſhould be very apt to look upon ſuch a little effeminate creature as you are, as having made a miſtake, and when you came from home, forgot what you was about, and left your petticoat b hind you." "What a brute it is," ſaid Lady Morgan, in a half whiſper to the major, who made no reply, I ſuppoſe out of delicacy to her ladyſhip; for I could ſee by his countenance he approved of every thing Mr. Hartley ſaid. "Not ſo Mr. Anſted. I cannot poſſibly agree to that, madam," replied he, "I think the gentleman has been very ill uſed; perhaps I have a fellow feeling for him; but I muſt own, as thoſe two young men ſeem to have forgot the reſpect which is due to years, I am glad he has had both ſenſe and ſpirit enough to retaliate."—Stanton

was going to reply; but a wink from my uncle silenced him at once; and Williams, at that instant, by a low bow to Lady Morgan, announcing dinner, put an end to the conversation. Mr. Hartley placed himself next me at table, and talked very little to any body else; his discourse is both instructive and entertaining; and so far from being the Cynic my uncle represents him, he appears to be possessed of the greatest good-nature, when not first attacked, and more warm in the resenting of an affront than belongs to the apathy of even a Stoical philosopher. When Lady Morgan thought it a proper time for the ladies to retire, she addressed herself to Mr. Hartley, and in a tolerably polite manner, requested his company in the drawing-room that evening, as she expected a small party at cards. "And pray," replied he, "may I beg to know how many tables your ladyship expects?" "Oh," returned she, "not above five or six; for it is only a private night." "I fear, madam," said he, "small as you represent your party to be, it will be too much company for such an old man as I am, and I would rather be excused." "But indeed I shall not excuse you," replied she. "Come, come," said Sir John, "for once, Hartley, divest yourself of the particularities you are so much addicted to, and be a rational creature." "I cannot say," retorted Mr. Hartley, addressing himself to my uncle, "that the playing at cards appears to me of estimation enough to entitle a man to the character of a rational creature: I think when properly used they are a very harmless amusement, and help by way of pastime, in a long winter's evening. As the neighbourhood about me is large, I very often set down myself for an hour or two to a party at whist (at a moderate stake), when it is too dark to be out of doors; but when abused, Sir John," continued he, "I think there cannot be an evil under the sun,

ſun, that a rational creature ought to look upon with a greater abhorrence; I do not diſlike whiſt, but I hate hazard." "It is cards, my good friend," replied my uncle, with a contemptuous ſmile, which was returned by Stanton to him again, "that Lady Morgan invites you to; you quite miſtake the game." "I am not in the leaſt miſtaken, Sir John; I call all games, where people ſet down to riſk more than their fortunes will allow of, hazard. If a man ruins his eſtate, his wife, his children, and himſelf, by gaming; I think it very little ſignification, if he curſes his ill luck and folly, from the throw of the dice, or the abſence of a few painted pictures on the cards; it is all hazard in that caſe, let the game be what it will." This ſpeech was delivered in that eaſy calm manner, which would have ſunk to the heart of any feeling perſon; my uncle himſelf appeared in the greateſt confuſion. A ſilence prevailed round the table for the ſpace of a minute or two; I watched George Morgan's countenance, and am convinced by the great ſerenity that preſided there, he is ſtill a ſtranger to this pernicious vice of his father's. Lady Morgan appeared in a greater flutter than I thought her capable of. Letitia coloured, and caſt her ſweet black eyes on the table, while her mother ſeemed to be ſearching for her gloves, and declaring ſhe could not find them; addreſſed herſelf to each of the gentlemen, with a hope to have their company by and by above. They all bowed aſſent, but Mr. Anſted, who ſaid he had an engagement he was obliged to attend that evening. Lady Morgan then roſe to leave the room. As I was following her, Mr. Hartley took hold of my hand, and whiſpered me, "For your ſake, Miſs Fenbrook, I will make my appearance above-ſtairs to night; I have too much pleaſure in beholding the daughter of my deceaſed friend, not to wiſh to remain in her company as long as I can." I bowed my thanks to

him, and believe all paſſed off well, as we heard them laughing ſoon after we got up. Adieu, my friend.

LETTER X.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

By the time this reaches my ever beloved Leonora, the ſo long promiſed packet will have arrived in town, it has given me concern, that it was not in my power to ſend it ſooner, but as our village neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Welſted, were going to London, I thought it a more ſecure conveyance by them, than if I had entruſted it to any of the farmers hereabouts; and for that reaſon have kept you ſo much longer in ſuſpence, than I could have wiſhed, knowing your great regard to every individual of our family; I ſhall draw a veil over the reſpective feelings of my worthy aunt and myſelf, during our peruſal of the different letters, you will find there, Lucerne gave us an opportunity of opening the packet, during my mother's abſence, by inviting her the evening he brought it, to ſee ſome improvements he has made at the parſonage, which he requeſted might be the next morning; and as luckily my aunt Danvers and I had viſited the family whilſt my mother was on ſome other employment, our excuſes paſſed very plauſibly, for not accompanying her there; as ſoon as ſhe was gone, we retired to my aunt's dreſſing-room, and while I with trembling hands was breaking open the ſeal, the following converſation paſſed; "Iſabinda," ſaid my

my aunt, "as Mr. Lucerne gave you the letters laſt night, which we are now going to examine, I am a ſtranger to what happened betwixt you, in relation to them; indulge my curioſity, my love, and give me a candid recital of his behaviour on the occaſion, with that openneſs which I have ſo often admired in you." "Indeed Madam," returned I, "very little paſſed, you know the younger part of the company we had with us yeſterday evening, wiſhed to take a ramble before tea; as the time of the year does not admit a thought of it afterwards: Lucerne accompanied us; as we paſſed the alcove, he ſtept into it, and beckoned me to him; I left his ſiſter Caroline, whoſe arm I was then leaning on, and haſtened to obey the ſummons; he appeared in very great confuſion, turned pale and red by turns, and heſitatingly ſaid, "receive oh! moſt amiable and ever adored Iſabinda, the greateſt proof you can poſſibly experience of the aſcendance you have over the unhappy Lucerne; for your peace of mind, I reveal a correſpondence I think I ought in honour to have concealed, alas! for your ſatisfaction, what is it I would not do?" "I am greatly obliged to you, Lucerne," interrupting him, and taking the parcel, "you cannot imagine, however," continued I, "that it can be any diſadvantage to my dear brother, to diſcloſe his ſituation to Mrs Danvers and me; but I muſt return to the company directly, or it will ſeem particular, you will therefore excuſe any further compliments: ſaying this, I left the alcove, and haſtened (after I had ſecreted the papers,) to rejoin the party I had left. I ſaw nothing more of him during our walk, and ſuppoſe he returned to the houſe directly, as we found him in the drawing room, with thoſe that had declined going. When we came back, my aunt looked very thoughtful: "It is as I feared," ſaid ſhe in a low voice, and ſighed; but recovering herſelf directly, began to

examine

examine the letters, which while I was ſpeaking, I had placed upon the table before her: they were all numbered with the greateſt exactneſs; and as the firſt is addreſs'd to her by Lucerne himſelf, in which is encloſed a letter from my brother, of a much longer date than any of the reſt, I have omitted them in the packet you will receive, as I think they will come with more propriety in this place, and ſhall therefore ſend them for your preſent peruſal, as in caſe you ſhould not yet have the other letters, they will be a kind of introduction to them.

Adieu, my deareſt Friend.

LETTER XI.

LUCERNE TO MRS. DANVERS.

WORTHY MADAM,

PERMIT me to intrude one moment on your patience, as the encloſed letter (which you will find by the date, was wrote to me by my friend Charles, before he came down to Springwood, to take his leave, previous to his departure from England;) is abſolutely neceſſary, by way of an introduction to the unfortunate detail I am now to lay before you, I therefore ſubmit it to your peruſal, though it does not particularly belong to the ſubſequent ones: we had many converſations relative to it, during the fortnight he was at Bellefield; but I might as well have talked to the whiſtling winds, and have expected them to ceaſe at my bidding, as perſuaded Captain Aſhton

to

to lend an ear to the dictates of reaſon and calm philoſophy; he however left this place with a fixt determination to go abroad; and though infatuated to the moſt artful and deſigning of women, the voice of honor ſtill prevailed, and he had not, (for I am certain I know his inmoſt thoughts,) even a wiſh to remain at home, as he has ſince done; I ſuppreſs my anſwer to the encloſed, as you will find very much the ſame ſentiments tranſcribed from Lord Rockſdale's far abler pen.

I am, madam, &c.

LETTER XII.

CAPTAIN ASHTON TO THE REVEREND MR. LUCERNE.

YES, my friend, I entirely agree with you; I feel myſelf under the greateſt obligations to the Marquis of Rockſdale; he has appointed me to a poſt in the approaching expedition; (unſolicited and unthought of by me,) which he has refuſed to numbers; wherefore ſay you, ariſes this averſeneſs, this ſtrong reluctance to go, where honour calls? Indeed Frank you are out there, I have not 'tis true that alacrity as to foreign appointments, which has hitherto, I hope, ſtrongly marked my character, but never let it be ſaid that Charles Aſhton obeys with reluctance a ſummons, which every other captain in the regiment would attend with joy. Wherefore queſtion you again this want of alacrity then: I'll tell you what, Lucerne, "you ſpiritual paſtors ought not to enquire too deeply into the concerns of us rakiſh young fellows: it

is degrading yourſelves into Roman catholic prieſts, and taking up the office of a father confeſſor; beſides you may chance to hear what perhaps may ſhock the delicacy of ſuch a puritanical divine as you are; I have for above this twelve month kept the ſecret entirely from you; is it not a little hard to be obliged to divulge it now, when I know all the recompence I ſhall have for ſo entertaining a ſtory, will be four ſides of paper crammed as full as they can hold, with good advice, morality, notions of honour, and what not? however as it is not the firſt affair of gallantry, I have entruſted to my clerical friend, I will ſatisfy your curioſity; though I am certain of meeting with nothing but reproof as uſual. The beginning of laſt ſpring was twelvemonth, I cannot preciſely tell you the day of the month, was marked out for an elegant maſquerade at the Pantheon. As numbers of my acquaintance were to be there, and Harry Stanton was prevented joining the frolick rout, by particular buſineſs, which was to detain him in the country for three or four days; he offered me his ticket, and likewiſe told me his dreſs was at my ſervice that evening, (mind, that, Lucerne, it was to be no expence to me; my darling foible, as you ſometimes call it, was gratified.) I catched at the offer directly, as knowing how much better a figure I ſhould make in the character of Mercury, than ſuch a clumſy, thick-ſet fellow, as you know he is. I do aſſure you, I made a moſt elegant appearance, when compleatly dreſs'd, (that is in my own mind,) and when I had viewed myſelf in the great pier glaſs, which Tom Varniſh ſo often admires his ſweet perſon in, thought it was hardly poſſible for half the women in the place to eſcape being in love with me. We ſallied forth about an hour or two after you, ſober mortals, were faſt aſleep, ſix jolly fellows ready to undertake any thing; the room was very full when we arrived; the dreſſes for the

moſt

moſt part magnificent, and the *coup d'œil* exceedingly ſplendid. Joy and mirth exhilarated my ſpirits; I mixed with the jocund throng; with them I danced, with them enjoyed the ſweet delights of muſic's power. I roved from fair to fair, as I ſuppoſed them all to be, if the black clouds which obſcured their lovely faces were removed; and having juſt gone down a dance with a moſt delightful girl, as my fancy painted her, the exerciſe, joined to the heat of the room, made me extremely dry, I went to a ſide-board to quench my thirſt with ſome of the liquors which I ſaw there, and for the greater convenience, as well as to aſſiſt in cooling me, took off my maſk, and ſtood ſome time admiring the objects around me, when a moſt elegant figure, which I had not before remarked, accoſted me. She was in a fancy dreſs, compoſed of a very clear white gauze, interſperſed with ſilver ſtars; the petticoat was pale-pink luteſtring, over which the ſkirt of the gown hung looſely in a careleſs and moſt becoming drapery: it was cloſe before, and flowed negligently on the ground behind to a tolerable length, but not in that *outré* ſtile, which at preſent is the prevailing faſhion: the body was made with the greateſt exactneſs, of the ſame colour as the petticoat, and the ſilver gauze over it, drawn in two or three places before, with pale pink ribbon. She had gathered ſleeves of ſilver gauze, tied with the ſame pink, and ſlaſhed in a very elegant manner to ſhew the linings: very fine Blond-lace tucker, and narrow ruffles of the ſame ſort, quilled very full. No other ornament on her charming boſom, Frank, and a fine diamond necklace round her throat—her lovely throat and neck, whoſe whiteneſs exceeded that of fallen ſnow: her beautiful dark-brown hair hung looſely round her face in curls, and wantoned down her back in ringlets; its flowing was ſuppreſſed by a pale-pink ribbon, negligently tied: ſhe had a little turban of pink tiffany

tiffany ſtuck on the left ſide of her head, betwixt which and her hair appeared four or five diamond ſtars, a long veil of ſilver gauze, the ſame as the reſt of the dreſs, fell from the top of her head to the extremity of her gown behind, trailing on the ground, and was artfully interwoven at the top (after being croſſed upon the hair) among the turban, the two ends hanging careleſſly down to her left ſhoulder. Silver ſandals, with pale pink roſes, adorned her feet; a pair of diamond ear-rings, and a very fine diamond girdle ornamented her ears and waiſt. Such was the divinity (for I could call her nothing elſe) which approached me.—"Mercury," ſaid ſhe, with a voice that ſtruck me with its peculiar ſweetneſs —"have you taken refreſhment ſufficient to enable you to go down another dance? Or is the heat of the room ſo intolerable as to prevent your performing any more?" "By Jupiter," replied I, "this is quite a challenge, and I ſhall keep you to it, my fair Goddeſs—can Venus imagine (for that form ſure belongs to her) when ſhe condeſcends to hints a wiſh to ſo inferior a deity as I am, that heat or cold will be of any impediment towards obeying her commands? Alike to me the burning zone, or frozen regions of the north: I fly, my charmer, to fulfil them;" and ſeizing her hand, was going to attend her to the ſet I had juſt left, when ſhe called out, laughing, "ſtop, however, a moment, your godſhip ſeems in haſte; but I muſt get a friend to adjuſt ſome part of my dreſs before I can mingle in the feſtivity." Saying this, ſhe turned to a veſtal virgin, who ſtood near her—the veil and ſkirt of the gown were drawn to a proper length—and we inſtantly began. Her appearance, her form, and the graceful movement which attended each ſtep, drew the eyes of every maſk around her. I was teized to death to know who ſhe was; and as I was perfectly ignorant, could only reply, that I ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed it to be Venus; but that I really, though it might ſeem a little ſtrange, was not at all acquainted with her. After we had finiſhed the dance, I begged to be honoured with her hand for the reſt of the evening—to which ſhe very readily agreed. But deſired to know my name, as elſe there would be a great impropriety in complying with my requeſt; as I am never at a loſs on thoſe occaſions —I told her my name was Draycot, that I was a limb of the law, and always to be heard of at Nando's Coffe-houſe; "but my ſweet creature," continued I, "as I have been ſo candid with you, may I not preſume to aſk for ſome information of the charming divinity, who has bleſt me with her company this evening?" "You certainly have a right to ſome return," replied ſhe, "my name is Cleora; you muſt excuſe my giving the ſurname; I am the widow of an officer of ſome rank, and the veſtal you ſee with me is my ſiſter." "Cruel!" returned I, "why this is telling me nothing at all!" She evaded a further anſwer, by ſaying that the muſic was beginning, and ſhe wiſhed to join the ſet. I got her as often as I could towards the ſide-board; wine enlivened her ſpirits, and by degrees ſhe was thrown ſo much off her guard that ſhe revealed her ſorname, complied with my preſſing intreaties to unmaſk for a few minutes, when I was ſtruck with the moſt charming pair of dark eyes, and expreſſive countenance I ever ſaw, and when the fatal time of ſeparation came, at laſt yielded to my earneſt ſolicitation of admitting me to viſit her. I handed her to a very genteel carriage, the arms in a lozenge; and after having enquired her place of abode, took leave of her, and the veſtal, who never quitted her.

The next evening I went to Seymour-ſtreet, enquired for Mrs. Mortimer, and was admitted into a genteel houſe, found the lovely widow in a drawing-room, lying on a ſofa, in a moſt elegant

gant *diſhabille*; her countenance languid from the fatigue of the preceding evening, but full of charms. Her ſiſter, a ſmart little woman, in a jacket and petticoat, ſat on the other ſide of the fire, and was reading to her, when Mr. Draycot was announced. There was other company all the evening; I was invited to partake of a very genteel ſupper, and ſpent part of the night there. We were ſo intoxicated with love on each ſide, though my dear Cleora's was accompanied with a modeſt reſerve, that we knew not how to ſeparate. To make ſhort of my ſtory, I viſited her every evening; her reſerve became leſs and leſs at each interview and ſhe very ſoon yielded to make me as happy as man could wiſh. What, without marriage? Aſhton? Upon my ſoul, Lucerne, I ſhould never have thought of putting on the ſhackles there. We paſſed a delightful week in this manner, when one evening ſhe told me, that ſhe had particular reaſons for deſiring me not to come but when ſhe ſent to me, "which," ſaid ſhe, ſeeing me look a little grave, "I will promiſe you ſhall be at leaſt two or three times a week; I will direct to Nando's Coffeehouſe." As I knew I could eaſily manage that, I did not contradict it, and took my leave. I received a billet from her in a day or two, and reſumed my viſits whenever ſhe ſent. We continued an intercourſe of this kind for two or three months, Harry Stanton and the reſt very often telling me, they were ſure I had got a girl in the corner; for I was not near ſo much with any of my friends as I uſed to be. "Come," ſaid Harry one day, "I will lay any wager you will not ſup with us to night at Donna Eſtifania's," which is the name he gives a miſtreſs he has kept ſome time. As I was engaged to Cleora that evening, and had never ſeen Eſtifania, I readily agreed to go with him, and after dinner we ſet out, five or ſix of us, in Stanton's carriage, for her

her lodgings, which is in Hill-ſtreet, Berkley-ſquare. We were uſhered into a very handſome drawing-room; but what was my ſurpriſe, as well as her's, when in the perſon of Eſtifania I ſaw the lovely and, as I thought, had it not been for me, the innocent Cleora Mortimer. She knew me directly, notwithſtanding I had my regimentals on, and was introduced to her by Stanton in the name of Captain Aſhton. She took an opportunity, while Harry was at cards, to let me know that our mutual deception, which was now revealed, had ſomething very pleaſant in it; and ſo far from ſtopping our intercourſe, as he had introduced me, I might now come to her own lodgings when I would, inſtead of meeting in Seymour-ſtreet; as that houſe belonged to a woman of the ſame caſt as herſelf, who paſſed for the widow of an officer. I have lived on with her ever ſince, at Stanton's expence, judge, therefore, if I can go abroad without ſome regret at parting.

LETTER XIII.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

THE packet which has been promiſed me by my ever dear friend not being yet received, I can only anſwer to the two letters incloſed in your laſt. I am afraid by many paſſages in that addreſſed to Mrs. Danvers from Lucerne, (which though ſhort, is peculiarly intereſting,) I ſhall find Eſtifania's acquaintance the moſt deſtructive to your brother's fame, as well as peace of mind, of any he could have acquired; how eaſily

ſily has poor Charles fallen into her toils, and with what alacrity did he that evening of the maſquerade, haſten to his own ruin; he has, however, ſtrongly kept up to the character marked out to you by your worthy aunt and myſelf; I have often endeavoured ſince my return to Harley-ſtreet, to get Stanton to be a little communicative concerning him, but he has always profeſſed total ignorance of his deſtiny, ſince he went abroad; I could not have thought he had been artful enough to be guilty of ſo much duplicity, mean enough to deny any thing, I can eaſily imagine him.- Mr. Hartley ſtaid with us that evening as he ſaid he would, and found an opportunity when not at cards to enter into a private converſation with me, notwithſtanding the prying eyes of Sir John, which were very ſeldom off him; but my uncle was obliged to cut in at one of the tables; and as I was then ſeated in an inner room, I perceived Mr. Hartley very ſoon after he was releaſed from play, enter it; he came up to me immediately, and drawing his chair cloſe to mine, addreſſed me in theſe words; "You cannot think, deareſt Leonora," ſaid he, "(for I have already done with all formality,) that an old fellow as I am, would by any means have entered into ſuch a ſcene of folly and diſſipation as that I have throughout this whole day been a witneſs to; if the moſt unfeigned regard to the memory of your deceaſed father, had not brought me hither; for his ſake and his amiable daughter's, I have once more returned to a houſe, which was it not for you, the behaviour of the inhabitants of it would have baniſhed me from for ever; but as you appear to me to be miſtreſs of a great deal of good ſenſe, (which indeed it is hardly poſſible a child of my valuable friend ſhould be without,) you muſt imagine by what has paſſed, it cannot be expected of me, to be very frequent in my viſits; I have a great many things to ſay to you, but they muſt

muſt not be imparted under this roof, and if they could, I feel ſo great a repugnance at being here, that it would not be in my power to diſcloſe them properly; I ſhall leave town in about a month, it is my fixed determination never to enter theſe doors (unleſs obliged to it) more; will you, can you, therefore diveſt yourſelf of the etiquette of your ſex, ſo far, as to honour me with your company at my lodgings, when you receive an invitation from me?" "My dear Sir, returned I, it would give me concern if I thought you imagined me ſo deficient of a grateful ſenſe, for the friendſhip I have this day experienced, as to heſitate one moment in complying with your requeſt; whenever I am favoured with a ſummons, you may depend upon my attending it." "Spoke like yourſelf," replied he, "ſuperior (I make no doubt) to the falſe delicacy which too often attends a female. I will tell you," continued he, "how we will manage it, here is my addreſs, taking a card out of his pocket, keep it till you hear from me, I ſhall write to you by poſt, there will be no occaſion for an anſwer, you will know where to find me, and I will ſtay at home in expectation of you the morning I appoint, which will be a few days before my departure: In the mean time, let me entreat you not to diſcloſe what I have ſaid to any body, and take care, my dear young friend, not to ſign your name to any thing, which may be tendered you in the interim, without carefully overlooking it." Saying this, he roſe from his chair and walked into the drawing-room: his laſt words made me ſhudder; I ſat motionleſs for ſome time, and was with difficulty rouſed from the ſtupor he had thrown me in, by ſeveral of my young companions, who rallied me upon the attention which that fine old gentleman had ſhewed me; I ſaw no more of him, for when I returned to the drawing-room, I found he had taken his leave. What can he mean? Iſabinda.

Surely

Surely my uncle cannot, would not be baſe enough to wiſh to defraud his ſiſter's daughter of her fortune; I muſt, I will hope, that Mr. Hartley, good, as I am ſure he is, ſuffers himſelf to be too much prejudiced by his diſlike to Sir John; he certainly is not capable of committing ſo much wickedneſs. I have this inſtant had your packet delivered me by Mrs. Welſted herſelf, ſhe would not ſuffer it out of her own hands, which was the reaſon I had it not before: I am all impatience to examine the contents. Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

CAPTAIN ASHTON TO THE REV. MR. LUCERNE.

PITY me, Lucerne, pity your friend! for the labyrinth in which he has involved himſelf. I know the humanity of your nature ſo well, and the great affection which every action has teſtified for your unfortunate Charles, convinces me the receipt of this letter, at a time when you imagine me ſo far divided from you, as to preclude any opportunity of writing, will give you the greateſt uneaſineſs; and your anxiety muſt be very much encreaſed, when you read the ſketch I am now going to draw, of my preſent ſituation: in a lonely cottage not many miles from town, upon a bed, which though tolerably clean, is made of the coarſeſt materials, a rug for my covering, and curtains ſo ſcanty, they hardly ſerve to ſhut out the inclemency of a bleak common, which, though at this early ſeaſon of the autumn, ſhivers with

with the equinoctial blaſts; caſements broken in ſeveral places; and hardly a chair, or ſtool, to accommodate the friendly viſitor, that might through pity extend his charity ſo far, as to take a view of me: in this wretched ſituation, lies the ſtill more wretched Charles Aſhton; far from the foſtering hand of his friend and patron Lord Rockſdale, divided from him by his own folly, and recovered from the delirium in which he has for this month paſt lain in, only to curſe his unhappy fate, and wiſh, (as I certainly do,) a late fatal event had put an end to my exiſtence; I cannot write any more; this is the firſt day I have been able to ſit up in my ſorry bed; I grow faint, and can only requeſt you, not by any means to think of coming to me. Write ſome comfort if you can, and direct to my lodgings in town: Lafere (my valet) goes every day there, to bring me any letters that may arrive; they know not where I am, nor what has befallen me; alas, it is my wiſh to conceal myſelf from all the world for ever!

LETTER XV.

THE REV. MR. LUCERNE TO CAPTAIN ASHTON.

WHAT words can paint to you, my deareſt Aſhton, the concern your lately arrived letter has cauſed me, the terrible deſcription you give me of every thing around you, convinces me of ſome dreadful event. I cannot fathom, wild with conjecture; I ſhould the inſtant I received it, have ſet off for London, but your prohibition is ſo ſtrict,

ſtrict, I dare not venture a contradiction to your requeſt. The delirium you mention to have ſo long ſtruggled with, ſhocks me much; but allow me, my friend, to ſay, the bitter wiſh which attends your recovery from it, hurts me in the tendereſt part. Shall man dare to repine at what the Almighty inflicts? are you, Charles, becauſe ſome unfortunate adventure has happened to you, which you confeſs is brought on by your own folly, to lay and curſe that, inſtead of bleſſing the hand which has reſtored you to your ſenſes again: and in the room of offering up your prayers to that Being, who has been merciful enough not to take you, in the midſt of all your ſins, wiſh to ruſh into his preſence uncalled, by an end of that exiſtence, which he thinks proper to continue to you? I make no doubt a very dark cloud at preſent obſcures every future hope, but we ſhort ſighted creatures cannot pierce beyond the limits appointed to us; and as by ſome unforeſeen accident, you are thus caſt down, fairer days may hereafter ariſe, by circumſtances equally improbable. I am very certain every care has been taken of you during your ſickneſs by Lafere, his integrity, often tried aſſiduity, and regard for you, are no ſecret to me: I would not wiſh to be too ſevere at this afflicting period, but had not his morals been a little corrupted by many ſchemes he has been obliged to undertake, for his gay unthinking maſter, I do not know in any ſtation of life, a more amiable man; I am under no anxiety on that account, but think, though I am quite a ſtranger to the cauſe of your illneſs, you ſhould remove from the poor and dreary ſituation you are in, as faſt as poſſible: to a mind ill at eaſe, poverty within doors, and a barren heath without, muſt have a gloomy effect; it may perhaps ſuit the diſpoſition of a recluſe, ſoured with diſappointments, to gaze on ſuch objects; but the ſanguine temper of my friend,

who

who has till now met no check in his career, is by no means ſuited to ſuch ſcenes. When you are ſufficiently recovered to give me a detail of the misfortune which has happened to you, write to me again; but do not torture me with ſuch letters as your laſt; I ſhall think the ſuſpenſe diſagreeable till I hear from you: but my anxiety will be encreaſed if your ſilence continues. As to the cauſe of your preſent unhappy ſituation; again, let me enforce it to you, quit your uncomfortable abode the inſtant you can; a warm habitation, and livelier proſpects, will contribute to your recovery: if ſecreſy is neceſſary, you need not I ſuppoſe remove any great diſtance from where you are; and you know you can depend upon your valet's choice for you. Should you wiſh to ſee me hereafter, you may depend upon me wherever you are; I am very uneaſy about you; Oh! Charles, Charles, what would become of the family at Bellefield, was I to ſhew them your letter?—God preſerve you.

LETTER XVI.

CAPT. ASHTON TO THE REV. MR. LUCERNE.

AFTER a fortnight's dreadful interval from your receipt of my laſt, of which I find Lafere has of his own accord twice informed you, after ſuffering in the cruelleſt manner as he has wrote you word, from the ſtubbornneſs of the fever, which till within theſe two days paſt, has baffled all the ſkill of my excellent phyſician, Doctor T., he has at length brought it to intermit, and I am now able

to ſit up moſt part of the day, and ſurvey the dreary common before me, which the approach of winter each day renders ſtill more horrid. In another week the Doctor thinks I may venture to remove into my own lodgings in Pall-Mall, and adviſes town in preference to the country, as he is of opinion my diſorder is now more mental than bodily; he is perfectly in the right, the fever I can find will very ſoon yield to his great experience; but alas, where throughout the whole faculty, can be found the man, who can reſtore a wounded ſpirit?——Oh! Frank, I have undone myſelf, had I but liſtened to your friendly counſel when laſt at Bellefield, how different now would have been the caſe; how often have you, as we together traverſed the woods, the fields, the valleys, and the hills which diverſify that elegant retreat of my paternal anceſtors, (rendered diſguſtful to me through my imprudent attachment to the moſt infamous of women) how often have you made a ſudden ſtop, with ardent friendſhip preſſed my hand in your's, and begged me to ſurvey thoſe ſcenes; reminded me of every virtue, every merit which my father was poſſeſſed of, and then entreated me to turn my eyes with impartial enquiry on myſelf, and think how different from the purity and innocence of that proſpect, were my purſuits in London; how different was the ſon, in every thought, in every action, from his worthy parent. Different indeed; the meanneſs of my conduct with regard to Stanton is ever before my eyes, ever open to my view; and though I have ſuffered to the greateſt degree for my folly, I cannot help owning the retribution to be juſt. Lord Rockſdale too, his kind advice was ſlighted; but you ſhall ſee his letters. I have made Lafere tranſcribe them, and will ſend them to you with this. I muſt leave off a little, the crooked lines will indeed inform you I am unable to proceed; when I reſume

my

my pen it ſhall be to gratify your impatience by the promiſed recital, at preſent I am unequal to it.—

Captain ASHTON in continuation.

I am now better again, and will haſten to my ſtory. After our parting, a melancholy parting it ſeemed to you, while your inconſiderate friend, I am ſure, appeared unmoved, or if any ſenſation was prevalent, it was that of joy at his return to his idol (Eſtifania); I drove my phaeton to town as hard as my horſes would carry me; and when I arrived, went directly to Hill-ſtreet, where I was received with every demonſtration of joy. She knew by the knock who it was, embraced me with rapture, and folding her lovely arms around me, "Charles," ſaid ſhe, "My Dear Charles, at laſt you are returned, how long has your abſence appeared to me, how tedious every day has ſeemed, how odious Stanton's tenderneſs, and what a long interval from happineſs have I experienced! She hung about me with every blandiſhment, each fond careſs that women of her caſt, ſo well know how to practiſe. Delighted with the ſight of her, and happy to be returned from what I called an exile, a baniſhment from every joy, my fondneſs was reciprocal; and I paſſed every hour with her, when not prevented by Stanton's viſiting her, or my own preparations for my departure. We went on in this manner till the beginning of the week before Lord Rockſdale intended leaving England; I ſpent the morning with Eſtifania—Stanton being gone to a hunting party, which was to detain him in the country till the next day. Never did ſhe look more lovely, never was her fondneſs more

tenderly expreſſed; when I aroſe to take my leave, ſhe intreated me in the moſt earneſt manner to return again in the evening; it was not in my power to comply, as I was engaged to dine with the Marquis, to ſettle every neceſſary arrangement for our departure; and was to meet ſeveral of my friends by way of a farewel ſupper at the St. Alban's Tavern, at night. I therefore told her I had not a moment to ſpare for the reſt of the day, but would ſee her the next morning before Stanton could poſſibly be arrived in town: She complained bitterly of my want of kindneſs for her; "What a diſagreeable evening, ſaid ſhe, "ſhall I ſpend without you!" "You can go to your friend, Mrs. Mortimer," replied I, "and I think you had better do ſo than be by yourſelf the whole afternoon." "No deareſt, Aſhton," returned ſhe, "if I have not your company, I care not what becomes of me, and I am determined to ſit and mope by myſelf; but are you ſure you cannot be with me any part of the evening?" "It is utterly impoſſible, my love," ſaid I, "therefore do not think of it;" I then haſtened to the door, and retreated as faſt as I could, as I found by my watch I had greatly overſtaid my time. When I went home to dreſs in order to dine with Lord Rockſdale, Lafere gave me a note from one of the gentlemen I was to meet at the St. Alban's, which informed me that the party was put off till the next evening, as it was not in the power of ſeveral of them, to fulfil their engagement that night. What ſhall I ſay to you, my friend? I was fool enough to rejoice at a circumſtance which would give me the happineſs of Eſtifania's company, for the remainder of the evening after I quitted Lord Rockſdale, which I determined to do as ſoon as I could: to make ſhort of a ſtory ſo long and ſo painful to me, I dined with the Marquis, ſettled every neceſſary buſineſs, got releaſed about nine o'clock, and flew to Eſtifania. I knocked

twice

twice or thrice at the door before I could gain admittance; at laſt the ſervant came, and ſaid his miſtreſs was at home; upon entering the drawing-room I was received with a moſt engaging ſmile, ſhe thanked me, how often did ſhe thank me for being better than my promiſe: I was, however, ſtruck with her appearance. She was moſt elegantly dreſſed, and the room was decorated and lighted up as if ſhe expected company; upon my making this obſervation to her, ſhe replied ſhe did not expect any body, but was determined, as ſhe was not to ſee me that evening, to lighten the gloom ſhe found had ſeized her upon the occaſion, and paſs away the time as faſt as poſſible, till the next morning bleſt her with the ſight of me again. We ſat down; tea was brought, ſhe a diſh, and I a diſh; ſhe ſipt, and ſipt; and I obſerved her converſation appeared much more ſtudied than uſual; there was not that eaſy gay chearfulneſs which had hitherto attended every word and geſture of my Eſtifania: I however, made no remarks upon it to her diſadvantage, and when tea was over, recollecting I had left a parcel in the window which remained unexamined for want of time in the morning, roſe to fetch it to the table, by which we were then ſitting: She ſtarted up from the ſofa in haſte, and aſked me, with great confuſion in her countenance, what I wanted; "there is nothing in that window I do aſſure you," ſaid ſhe. "Not any thing you know of," replied I, careleſſly, "I dare ſay," (without being at all ſtruck with the apparent confuſion ſhe was in:) "but, as I depoſited ſomething there this morning, unnoticed by you, I fancy I ſhall be able to find it in the ſame place this evening, without your aſſiſtance, my dear." Saying this, I pulled back the curtain, but could not find it; and was going to ſearch for it in the two other windows, when, upon letting go the curtain, I thought I heard ſomething tumble, which, as I ſtept forward, I trod

upon; I ſtooped, and to my great aſtoniſhment, took up a hat, which by its appearance had ſome very ſmart fellow for its owner. "Heyday," ſaid I, "what have we got here?" turning the hat round and bringing it to the candle, "will you do me the favour, Madam, to tell me to whom this belongs?" "Belongs!" replied ſhe, with the moſt conſummate aſſurance, "to whom can it belong? why, you know yourſelf, it is Harry Stanton's." "No, Eſtifania," ſaid I very gravely, "whatever dupe you have hitherto made of me, you cannot deceive me ſo far, as to paſs that hat on me for Stanton's; this has neither the mark of the buck, or the fox-hunter, the Jemmy Jeſſamy is viſible, though unſeen, in the wearer of it; but he ſhall not remain long unnoticed," continued I, "he cannot be very far from this place; and I ſhall take the liberty to drag him from his obſcurity, if it is only to thank him, that by his negligence, I have diſcovered the perfidy of an infernal devil, as I can ſee very plainly you have been to me." I had hitherto kept my temper tolerably well, but my rage now began to paſs all bounds; I flew about the room like a madman; looked under all the chairs and tables, behind the ſcreen, drew up the window-curtains, opened the windows, ſhut them again, and going to a very fine India cabinet, that had a great deal of china upon the top, ſhook it till the china every bit of it fell, and was broke all to pieces. "Devil," ſaid I, to the weeping Eſtifania, who ſat crying by the chimney, "unlock theſe drawers this inſtant; perhaps you have concealed your paramour in one of them," (you are to obſerve, Lucerne, it was one of thoſe pieces of nicknack, full of ſmall drawers, where ladies generally keep their fans and ribbons,) "and I am determined to have him out if he is here," continued I. I was going on in this manner, when a voice, I did not at all recollect, called out to me from a cloſet where I had often

been

been hid myſelf, when Stanton has come in abruptly upon us, and which the fury I was in, had made me entirely forget. "Aſhton," ſaid the perſon who ſpoke, releaſe me from my confinement here, and I will ſpare you the trouble of running about in this phrenzy any longer; I flew to the cloſet, the key was on the outſide; I rather tore the door open than unlocked it, when to my great ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment, Sir Edward Beemont! the only one of the Stanton party which I had the leaſt value for, iſſued forth; he approached me laughing, and told me we had caught each other, "but if you will keep my ſecret, I will keep yours," ſaid he gaily, "I promiſe you." This put me, if poſſible, into a ſtill greater fury than ever; Sir Edward is a very handſome man, and I naturally thought that love, not profit, had been Eſtifania's inducement for betraying me. "I don't know what you may think of the matter, Sir Edward," replied I, "but inſtead of keeping the ſecret as you call it, I ſhall inſiſt upon public ſatisfaction, for the outrage you have committed." "Public ſatisfaction! Aſhton," "Yes, Sir Edward, I inſiſt upon it, ſword or piſtol ſhall decide the affair, if you do not mean to be branded for a coward every where." "A coward," replied Sir Edward, with great ſerenity, "that name would ill ſuit the character I have ever maintained through life; but you ſurely, my dear Aſhton, cannot be in earneſt, you would not degrade yourſelf ſo much as to riſk your life for a common proſtitute?" "I have been wronged," replied I ſullenly, "greatly wronged by you, and I will have ſatisfaction." "As to the wrong I have done you, replied Sir Edward, with a ſmile he could not ſuppreſs, "I heartily wiſh, Aſhton, I may never be guilty of a greater injuſtice; we men are apt to conſider ſuch abandoned women as theſe, our lawful prey; I will not pretend to ſay we are guiltleſs in ſo doing, but if we are not, it is to a higher

power that we ſtand accountable; for as to the traffic of this world, if I pay as great a price as yourſelf, or even Stanton, which I dare ſay I have done, I think I have a right to come in for my ſhare, of what is common to all the town." "You will I hope, however," retorted I, "confeſs you was not very open in your traffic, when you conſented to be locked up here?" "That was through the interceſſion of Eſtifania," returned he, "ſhe told me it was Stanton, and that I ſhould ruin her fortune entirely, if he ſuſpected me to be with her." "Be that as it may" ſaid I, almoſt out of breath with rage, "I ſay it again, I demand ſatisfaction, and if you do not grant it me to-morrow morning, I will proclaim you as I ſaid before, for a coward." Sir Edward upon this changed countenance, he rung the bell, and ordered the ſervant to get a coach; while it was coming, he turned to me and ſaid, "as this affair, Captain Aſhton, is likely to turn out in a ſerious manner, it will be better to diſcuſs the matter in a more private place; give me leave to ſet you down at your own lodgings, and we ſhall have time enough to ſettle every thing by the way?" "With all my heart," replied I. The ſervant now entered to let us know the coach was at the door, which, when Eſtifania heard, ſhe threw herſelf at our feet, and begged us not to ruin her with Stanton, for if he caſt her off, ſhe muſt very ſoon be reduced to want and miſery: we were both ſo much aſhamed of ourſelves, (that is, if I can judge of Sir Edward's feelings by my own), that we made her no reply; and I, ſtill inſiſting on ſatisfaction, (fool as I was) we agreed in the coach to meet the next morning, to decide the affair.

Captain

Captain ASHTON in continuation.

AGAIN I reſume my pen; I am better to day, and have paſſed the uſual time for the return of my fever; I will continue where I left off yeſterday. When I arrived at home, Sir Edward followed me in; and having ſhut the door, addreſſed me in a manner, that would have brought any one but ſuch a madman as I was, to their reaſon; "Captain Aſhton," ſaid he, "taking hold of my hand, this is a very fooliſh affair; I could wiſh you would be contented without the ſatisfaction you require of me: I abhor duelling in general, but more particularly ſo, when it is occaſioned by an object, we ought to look upon with the greateſt contempt; be aſſured, had I not been very certain, that Eſtifania was one of the moſt abandoned of her ſex, that every individual of Stanton's party, even to that deſpicable fellow Tom Varniſh, had been connected with her, I would not by any means have wronged my friend, by keeping her company; but when I found the truth of what had been affirmed to me, I will not pretend to greater virtue than other people; I am a mere mortal; I fell into her ſnares, and conſidering her as common property, where wit and beauty ſuch as her's aſſails, what man on earth can poſſibly reſiſt; as I ſaid before, I abhor the very thoughts of a duel, nevertheleſs, as you have called upon me, if you ſtill inſiſt upon it, I muſt anſwer your challenge as a man of honour ought." "I do inſiſt upon it," returned I." "Well then," ſaid he, calmly, "chooſe your weapons." "Piſtols returned I." "I could wiſh," ſaid he, "Captain Aſhton, the ſword had been your choice; as I never was in the army, you may perhaps have equal advantage, and moſt likely would be ſuperior to me there; but I will honeſtly acquaint you, I do

not think you would be a match for me at piſtols, it requires great compoſure to be a ſteady markſman; I am not moved to paſſion by the foregoing incident as you are, and beſides that, I muſt tell you candidly, I am in general thought to have as good an aim as any man in England, therefore let me adviſe you, if we muſt fight, let it be with ſwords." "No, no," ſaid I, furiouſly, "piſtols, piſtols." "Well then, "replied he," ſince it muſt be ſo, at ſeven to-morrow morning I will call upon you; we had beſt ride there, and have no body but our own ſervants to accompany us." "Agreed," replied I, "Lafere ſhall attend me; there is no occaſion for further parley." "No, certainly," ſaid he, "with a little warmth," and took leave directly. When he was gone, I ordered Lafere to be ready to attend me with the two ſaddle horſes by ſeven the next morning; I found he had been liſtening; the poor faithful fellow burſt into a flood of tears, and falling down upon his knees, begged me with great earneſtneſs to conſider what I was about; "for God's ſake, my dear maſter," ſaid he, "if you fall, what can I ſay to the family at Bellefield? what will become of the worthy Mr. Lúcerne, ſhould I (which heaven avert,) be the meſſenger of a fatal event?" "Prithee," ſaid I, "have done with your impertinence, and leave the room, I am maſter of my own actions, and no body ſhall dictate to me." He ſighed deeply, muttered ſomething to himſelf, and obeyed my commands. The next morning Sir Edward called at ſeven; we did not exchange a ſyllable until we came to the common; when he deſired me to chooſe my ground, which I did; (but as my paſſion was not in the leaſt abated) in ſo unſteady a manner, that the ball went at a great diſtance from my adverſary: he in his turn fired, and lodged the contents in my left ſhoulder: wild with the pain and diſappointment, I fired again, the ball grazed Sir Edward's hat;

he

he immediately fired his ſecond piſtol in the air, and approaching me, with a look of the greateſt compaſſion; "Aſhton," ſaid he, "why would you oblige me to this?" I heard no more, for I fell down in a fainting fit at his feet. I underſtood afterwards, that Lafere ſeeing me fall, ran up in the greateſt agony, crying out, "my maſter is dead." Sir Edward aſſured him I was not, as he was very certain he had not wounded me in a mortal part. He helped them to bring me to this cottage, mounted his horſe and went to a neighbouring village, where he recollected there lived a ſurgeon very eminent in his profeſſion, and brought him to me by the time Lafere had got me to bed: I was then come to my ſenſes again: the ball was extracted, though with great difficulty, it had not touched the bone, therefore there was no fear of amputation being neceſſary, which was all Sir Edward apprehended; a fever however came on the next day: I was delirious at intervals (as I mentioned before) for a month: have been above ſix weeks in this forlorn place, and am now, owing to the ſkill of my phyſician and ſurgeon, upon the recovery: a day or two after I came out of my delirium, I remembered all the horrors of my fate. Sent Lafere to town, who brought word back, the Marquis of Rockſdale had been gone three weeks, and gave me the encloſed letters, which had been left at my lodgings, during my illneſs. I have likewiſe ſent you one his Lordſhip wrote to me (as you will find by the contents,) ſome time before the others. Oh! had I profited by the friendly counſel I then received, I had not now been the wretch I am. Adieu. Lucerne, lament though you cannot eaſily forgive the errors of your unhappy friend.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

LORD ROCKSDALE TO CAPTAIN ASHTON.

As I have been an eye witneſs to many acts of bravery during the late war, and was no ſtranger to Captain Aſhton's wiſh to ſignalize himſelf, (young as he then was,) in the military line; I am very certain if one unfortunate circumſtance prevents not, he will receive with joy, the unſolicited appointment I now offer him, in the approaching expedition, in which common fame muſt have informed him, I am nominated commander in chief: an expedition which, though perhaps it may be attended with toil and fatigue, will be totally free from the danger, and horrid ravages, which ſurround the field of battle; your father, Charles, was ever my inſtructor and worthy friend; and it is with the greateſt pleaſure I find myſelf able to return the obligations I owe him, by promoting a ſon, for whom I have conceived the higheſt regard: the circumſtance I refer to, is your imprudent attachment to your friend Stanton's miſtreſs Eſtifania; how can a man of your ſenſe, be ſo far miſled by the dazzling charms of beauty only, as to form an union as ſtrict, and ſeemingly as laſting on your ſide, as could poſſibly have ſubſiſted if every virtue, every modeſt attraction, had joined to have cemented your affection? You will ſay perhaps, that through the interceſſion of the late Marquis my father, I married ſo young, that I am not a compleat judge of the difference betwixt a domeſtic life and the charms (as you young fellows call them,) of liberty and diſſipation; but you are extremely in the wrong if you think ſo; I was three and twenty when I united

united to Lady Frances Ruſhton, and, like other men, ranged from flower to flower before that period; but never could have had a thought of ſettling for any length of time where nothing was to be found, but the falſe allurements of vice and proſtitution: and you may believe me when I ſay, though lady Frances would not at that time have been the object of my choice, if duty to the beſt of parents had not biaſſed me, yet the refined underſtanding ſhe is miſtreſs of, her great affection, and the ſincere deſire ſhe has ever ſhewed to oblige, joined to her modeſt feminine attractions, convinces me that one day, nay, even an hour of conjugal happineſs, is ſuperior to years of folly and debauchery, which can at laſt end in nothing, but remorſe and diſappointment. The bed of down, and wanton allurements of an abandoned woman, but ill ſuit for any time a young adventurer in arms. Do you think, Aſhton, had I at your time of life, though the tie that binds me is an honourable one, (ſunk in the embraces of my amiable wife) neglecting (as you have done, for a worthleſs woman) every opportunity of advancing myſelf in my profeſſion: do you think, I ſay, great as the Rockſdale intereſt is, I ſhould at the age of ſix and thirty, have been chief in command on ſuch an expedition as the approaching one? No, Charles, the ſoldier's path through life is often rugged; but where it is ſo, if properly trod, it either entombs us with laurels by our meridian, or gives freſh glory to our ſetting ſun. Quit then, let me entreat you, quit this woman: think what a concern it would be to your worthy mother, was ſhe to know how ſtrongly, how fatally you have connected yourſelf. I have not ſeen her for many years; but when a boy, and not old enough to form a judgment myſelf, have often heard her mental perfections were faultleſs as her form—what then muſt be her thoughts of a ſon, whoſe purſuits are ſo entirely deſtructive to his

his welfare, his honor and his friendſhip? We are all human nature, therefore if you are inclined to follow my advice, and fear your own ſteadineſs in the execution, diſcharge your lodgings directly. As I ſhall not leave England for ſome time, my houſe is open for your reception; I ſhall with pleaſure receive you, and it will, I know, be the higheſt ſatisfaction to Lady Rockſdale, if ſhe can by any means contribute to break your preſent chains. Believe me, Captain Aſhton, the world talks loudly of you; your duplicity to Stanton is the theme among all your acquaintance—they laugh, —while every experienced officer ſhakes his head at the ſhameful neglect you have lately ſhewed to your profeſſion. Lord Rockſdale ſtoops to entreat you to accept the offered poſt: he begs you to be yourſelf again. We ſhall have many things to ſettle, if you go with me; and my houſe, which I again offer you, will be a much more proper aſylum, than the arms of Eſtifania.

LETTER XVII.

LORD ROCKSDALE TO CAPT. ASHTON.

WITH what aſtoniſhment, what concern have I found the appointed hour for buſineſs paſs over; without the arrival of Captain Aſhton: all yeſterday was Lord Rockſdale waiting for an inferior officer; this morning I continued every hour, in equal ſuſpenſe: Surely that woman, ſo fatal to your character, can never have had ſuch an aſcendance over you, as to have been deſtructive to your

your future fame and honour too. The cauſe you gave me for not quitting your lodgings for my offered habitation, though I looked upon it, I confeſs, as a mean prevarication, I noticed not, and your attention afterwards, filled me with hopes, (though ſtill a captive to that ſyren Eſtifania), you would act with proper heroiſm in an affair, (where more than life,) your future proſpects and welfare were concerned. How different, how painful now to me, are my thoughts on this occaſion; but I may be miſtaken; ſome unforeſeen event may have detained you. The ſervant I ſend with this has orders to ſee you if poſſible, I will remain at home this evening. Oh Charles, let me entreat you to repair your neglect.

LETTER XVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I HAVE been greatly taken up with preparations for my departure for this week paſt, but cannot leave England, which I am now upon the point of doing, without writing from Portſmouth a few lines, to my ſtill dear Charles Aſhton. The dreadful ſuſpence I was in upon your account, was cleared up the morning after I wrote to you laſt, by the worthy Sir Edward Beemont; he had been at your lodgings, and finding a letter from me there, judged it neceſſary to call upon me, and gave me an accurate account of every circumſtance relative to the fatal affair. Aſhton, you are under the greateſt obligations to that man; with what greatneſs and forbearance did he endeavour

deavour to combat your weakneſs, and inſtead of the piercing point of the hoſtile ſword, though urged to it by the greateſt imprudence on your part, offered reiterated proofs of the ſtrongeſt friendſhip; hard, very hard is it, that the laws of honour are ſo rigid in point of challenges, he was to riſk his life, becauſe a madman called him forth? he was to fight for a woman he deſpiſed, becauſe the dupe to her charms, urged him to it in a manner, that was every other way, unanſwerable; and had you fallen a ſacrifice to your folly, he would, with his way of thinking, have bid adieu (from remorſe of conſcience) to happineſs for ever, becauſe your intemperate paſſion knew no bounds. There was no occaſion, Aſhton, to give this proof of your valour; true courage lies not in raſh audacity at home, its proper ſphere is in foreign parts, where honor calls. Shall friend, on friend, raiſe that arm, which was only deſtined by a ſuperior power, to chaſtiſe a foe, and defend the ſovereign which he ſerves? You have, I am concerned to ſay it, through your imprudence, miſſed an opportunity of gaining experience, which can never (moſt likely) be recalled; I am ſorry for it, I pity your failings; but, while I look with deteſtation on your conduct, cannot help owning that I love the man. Let this, my friend, be a future warning to you; avoid from henceforth the ſteps that lead to an attachment for an abandoned woman: as I am no ſtranger to your way of thinking, I can venture to ſay you have ſuffered as much as poſſible, through your error; may it amend your conduct, how joyful ſhall I then be, at my return to ſee you! I ſincerely forgive every ſlight ſhown to me throughout the affair; the coolneſs in your acceptance of the poſt, the declined offer of my houſe, the too viſible haſte you was ever in, to tranſact each neceſſary buſineſs, will be blotted from my memory for ever; and painful recol-

lection

lection will only bring to mind, the fatal iſſue of the affair. I am ſent for; the convoy is ready, the ſoldiers are embarking, the wind ſits fair, and every officer awaits his general's call. Adieu; in diſtant regions I ſhall often beſtow a thought on thoſe that are dear to me, but it will be a proper thought; my parting from the worthieſt of women, I will own to you created a pang, but Lord Rockſdale was guilty of no imprudence.

LETTER XIX.

THE REV. MR. LUCERNE TO CAPT. ASHTON.

In what a dreadful dilemma, Oh! Charles, has your imprudent conduct thrown you; the pit of deſtruction has opened wide to devour you, and though you have been miraculouſly ſaved from the abyſs unfathomable, you have ſeverely ſuffered for the many follies you have been guilty of. Errors of judgment, my friend, admit of pardon, though even of a flagrant nature; but what can we ſay for the man, who endowed with ſuperior underſtanding and more ſhining talents than are uſually met with, perverts thoſe gifts, which providence has allotted him for the beſt and wiſeſt ends, by making them ſubſervient to pleaſures, which when improperly indulged, are fit recreations for nothing but the brute! Had your worthy friend, Lord Rockſdale, been as well acquainted with the meanneſs of your conduct towards Stanton, as he was with your licentious attachment to Eſtifania, I believe you will be eaſily convinced his laſt letters would not have

flowed

ſlowed in the ſtile of lenity, which marks almoſt every line of that amiable officer. You will I preſume think me too ſevere in attacking you as I do, conſidering the weak condition you are at preſent in; but I am grieved; my very ſoul, if I may make uſe of the expreſſion, is hurt at your conduct. Beſides, it is with concern I ſay it, I know too well how ſoon each ſerious thought will be ſhaken off; fleeting as time, inconſtant as the wind, each manly reſolve will be no more, ſoon after your return to town; nay, if your gay companions have found you out in your retreat, and returning health aſſiſts their counſel, every remembrance of the late fatal affair has by this time vaniſhed. Had I been your phyſician, Aſhton, my injunctions would have been, to have avoided London as you would a peſtilence; in that gay metropolis, has every proper thought and every virtuous act been buried: Why ſhould you return to a place where every merit which you once poſſeſſed, has been entirely loſt? the inſtant your arrival is announced to the profligate Eſtifania, ſhe marks you as her own again: believe me when a woman of that caſt has once had the aſcendance (I will not uſe a harſher expreſſion) over a young fellow, (which I ſuppoſe you will allow was the caſe with you,) ſhe reckons him however ill uſed, in her power for ever; nature has been profuſe to you in perſonal gifts, and therefore ſhe may again chooſe you, as the object of her wanton hours, till another, Sir Edward Beemont, equally attractive both in countenance and perſon, preſents himſelf to her view. And is Capt. Aſhton, the ſon of my ever to be revered friend, to ſubmit to ſuch ignominy? is it proper that he ſhould be the looſe dalliance of an abandoned proſtitute? the very thought is terrible. Surely there are villages and country towns enough in the vicinity of London (as your profeſſion if rightly followed obliges you to be near it), where

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an agreeable, as well as faſhionable ſociety is to be found; and I ſhould think the air in any one of them muſt be far more reſtorative, than what you can poſſibly breath in the regions of St. James's. A ſecond time you are requeſted to quit your lodgings in Pall-Mall; had I a palace to offer you in exchange, you ſhould ſhare it with me; but as you have acted, this part of the world was you at liberty, would by no means ſuit.—I cannot offer you a place in my little cottage when you have excluded yourſelf from your own ſuperior manſion, ſo nearly ſituated to mine. Oh! Aſhton, could you but ſee your friend Lucerne, now writing to you; the agitation of ſpirits he is in; could you but diſcover the anxiety he labours under on your account, you would certainly do every thing in your power to alleviate his ſufferings. Conſider, ſhould you return to your former apartments, it is hardly poſſible (though at ſo great a diſtance,) but ſome officious perſon will bring the uncomfortable tidings here: Should they reach Bellefield, I tremble for the beſt of mothers. Let me entreat you, Charles, to think of what you are about: you will deſtroy the peace of mind of your worthy aunt, the ſerenity and chearful eaſe of your lovely ſiſter will be no more, and you will plant a dagger in the boſom of your moſt amiable parent, which will, in a ſhort time put an end to her exiſtence; their every wiſh, their every hope was centered in your attendance on Lord Rockſdale; judge then what they muſt ſuffer, were they to be informed, you are by your own fault, ſtill in England. Adieu.

LETTER XX.

CAPT. ASHTON TO THE REV. MR. LUCERNE.

You are too ſevere, Lucerne, indeed my friend, you are too ſevere upon me; was you at this time to ſee the airy, gay Charles Aſhton, you would own you had gone too far; my health for certain is entirely re-eſtabliſhing, but the ſting of remembrance ſtill remains incurable; pale, emaciated, my arm in a ſling, my ſpirits entirely gone, and my weak legs hardly able to ſupport the frame they totter under; in ſhort, the total reverſe of what I was: ſurely the ſituation I now deſcribe is bad enough, without having the man I truly eſteem, add to the bitter cup. You wrong me much, in ſuſpecting me capable of ſuch idiotiſm, (after what has paſſed), as to ever attach myſelf again to the worthleſs Eſtifania; no, Frank, I have too much pride for that: I will own to you, my miſplaced affection approached almoſt to idolatry, but vanity, my friend, "vanity" was the chief incentive; charmed with her beauty, delighted with her ſprightly wit, and amuſed by the chearful gaiety, which attends her every word and action, I fell into her ſnares; but I ſhould long ago have ſhaken off my chains, had not this more than Circe, artfully rivetted them cloſer every day, by the ſtrongeſt marks of affection; I thought myſelf the only man on earth ſhe ever loved, and imagined, as I was not ignorant ſhe had been connected with numbers, there was ſomething ſuperior in me to other men, that had inſpired ſo great a paſſion. I have ever been a very ridiculous coxcomb, and have now given ſufficient proof, what dangerous conſequences ariſe, from indulging too great a ſelf-applauſe.

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She perſuaded me into a ſincere belief, that ſhe lived for me alone; that ſhe ſtill let Stanton viſit her, (though ſhe abhorred him ever ſince ſhe had been acquainted with me), for our mutual convenience, that no other man ſhould ever be admitted in private to her more, and as ſoon as I had left England, that ſhe ſhould requeſt Harry, to let her reſide at one of his country-houſes, where ſhe was determined to remain, ſecluded from every one but him, till my return: I will not tire your patience, with a recital of the many arts ſhe made uſe of, to keep me entangled in the net ſhe had ſpread for me; nay, ſhe even urged me in the ſtrongeſt manner; and that frequently, not to leave England; but you will, I hope, Lucerne, believe what I ſay, ſhe ever found me unalterably fixed on my departure: You will, perhaps, be curious to know what became of her, after the evening Sir Edward Beemont and I met at her lodgings. When Stanton viſited her the next day, ſhe told him that ſhe had like to have been involved in a dreadful affair, the night before; that Sir Edward and I, (both very much in liquor,) had taken it into our heads to pay her a viſit, thinking we ſhould meet him, (that is Harry) with her; that we had not been long there, before we begun to quarrel exceedingly, that a challenge enſued, notwithſtanding her entreaties to the contrary, and that we went off in a hackney coach together, ſhe knew not where, and was an utter ſtranger how the affair had terminated; but it had given her great uneaſineſs; for, as no other man but himſelf had ever been admitted into her houſe, without his introduction; ſhe had always kept up her character in the neighbourhood, as ſhe paſſed him off for her brother. Stanton is as fond of her as he can be of any thing, he therefore ſaid all he could to comfort her; and had called twice at Sir Edward's lodgings, and likewiſe at mine, before Sir Edward returned to town, who thought

thought it beſt not to undeceive him. Stanton has been with me two or three times ſince; rallies me heartily upon my heroiſm, and the elegance of my country retreat; tells Sir Edward and I, we frightened his little donna, Eſtifania, out of her wits; and ends with, "upon my ſoul, Aſhton, I am glad things turned out no worſe though; Sir Neddy is ſo good a ſportſman, I wonder he did not ſhoot you through the body, for he never miſſes his mark." But, to turn to more ſerious ſubjects: your repreſentation of the diſtreſs of my family, ſhould they know I am ſtill in England, has touched me to the quick; my aunt is an eſtimable woman, my ſiſter has many perfections, and it would grieve me, to have them hurt on my account; but when I think of my mother, oh my friend, I cannot expreſs what I feel: the moſt engaging of women, the beſt of parents, and the moſt valuable of friends: I will do every thing in my power to prevent a diſcovery; I will accept of the worthy Sir Edward's offer, of his villa, near Hampton-Court, where he reſides occaſionally, all the winter: having ſent Lafere to town, this day, to diſcharge my lodgings in Pall-Mall, and ſhould any little retreat in that part of the world be vacant, will ſituate myſelf there, for the preſent: as I am unable as yet, to mount guard, I have no call to town.

LETTER XXI.

THE REV. MR. LUCERNE TO MRS. DANVERS.

I HAVE ſent you, madam, in my friend's letters, a very circumſtantial account of the fatal affair which has detained him in England, I am ſure I need not enforce again, the neceſſity of the concealment that muſt be obſervep to Mrs. Aſhton: Charles's laſt letter

letter very plainly ſhews, that a diſcovery would be fatal to them both; a ſtronger affection I am ſure never ſubſiſted betwixt a ſon and his parent, ſhould ſhe get information of his being here, tho' ſoftened to her as to the circumſtances to the greateſt degree, ſhe would wiſh to ſee him, and conſcious as he is of his own imprudence, I am very certain he cannot for a length of time ſtand the ſhock; and was he able to do it, the alteration which I underſtand by Lafere, is at preſent too apparent in him, would entirely overcome her; he wrote me word but laſt week, that though his maſter is perfectly recovered as to his health, has left off the ſling, and is greatly mended in his looks, yet his ſpirits are at times ſtill very indifferent, conſidering ſeveral months have intervened ſince the unhappy period. I likewiſe received a letter from Captain Aſhton yeſterday; he informs me that he is ſettled in a ſmall houſe he has taken for two years at Richmond, as he chooſes to be near Sir Edward Beemont, of whom I am very glad to obſerve, he ſpeaks in the higheſt terms; his ſtyle is ſometimes high, at intervals ſinks again; but upon the whole, if I may judge by his writing, he is greatly mended; as I think it by much the moſt comfortable letter I have received from him ſince his illneſs: I have indeed received ſeveral beſides thoſe I ſubmit to your peruſal; but as none of them are of any material conſequence, I did not incloſe them in the packet. By his own account he leads at preſent a very rational and ſober life; Sir Edward ſpends moſt of his time now at Hampton; they are very much together; and have a very large acquaintance at Richmond, and the adjacent villages: he ſeems to like his ſituation exceedingly; has been upon guard at St. James's two or three times, returned to Richmond the next day: ſorry am I to ſay it, that during his unhappy intercourſe with the abandoned Eſtifania, that duty was entirely neglected, as I find he always pleaded ſickneſs,

ſickneſs, and got a friend to ſupply his place; if any ſcheme can be hereafter found out, to apprize the worthy Mrs. Aſhton with ſafety to herſelf and my friend, that he has not quitted England, I ſhall be happy if I can by any means be inſtrumental to it, as I think the approach of ſummer in his native air, could he be got to reviſit Bellefield, would be very beneficial to him in many reſpects; but as that is a very difficult point, I can only ſay, I ſhall at any time be ready to execute your commands in the affair. I am,

Madam, with the greateſt reſpect,
Your moſt humble ſervant.

Charles has lately received a very kind letter from the Marquis of Rockſdale, which I believe has contributed greatly towards raiſing his ſpirits, but I am ignorant of the purport of it; he tells me that he called one day laſt week in St. James's ſquare; that Lady Rockſdale gave him the letter, (which had lately arrived,) and that ſhe purpoſed ſetting off the next day, for the Marquis's ſeat in Shropſhire, where ſhe intended moſtly to remain, while his lordſhip continued abroad.

LETTER XXII.

MRS. DANVERS TO THE REV. MR. LUCERNE.

GIVE me leave, reverend ſir, to return you my very ſincere thanks for the communication you have favoured me with; the contents of the packet, (as you may ſuppoſe) have given me the greateſt concern; Charles has been very imprudent indeed,

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and that in a point which of all others is moſt afflicting to us: indeed Mr. Lucerne what you ſaid in one of your letters to him is a melancholy truth, we had all ſet our hearts on his going with that moſt amiable of men the Marquis of Rockſdale. I am truly hurt at the affair, but was always fearful ſomething terrible would one time or other happen to him; the death of his worthy father, when he was not more than twelve years old; his choice of the army, which obliged him to quit the moſt indulgent as well as moſt ſenſible of mothers, by ſeventeen: joined to his natural diſpoſition, initiated him too early, much too early, into what is falſely called polite life: and his acquaintance with the vicious and half witted Stanton, has very near finiſhed his ruin; the preſent account however that you give of him is not unpleaſing; you may reſt aſſured, I ſhall not take a ſingle ſtep towards diſcovering what has happened to his dear mother, without conſulting you firſt; you have acted the part of a ſenſible and true friend to him, as well as us all; and my beſt wiſhes attend you worthy Sir for it.

LETTER XXIII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

WELL, my dear Leonora, I make no doubt you have long before this peruſed the dreadful account of my poor brother's ſuffe ings; and now tell me, ſincerely tell me, do you not think (had his errors been ten times worſe than they were,) that his puniſhment

niſhment has been, what even in that caſe would have infinitely ſurpaſſed his faults; how happy are we poor mortals in that which many of us falſely term a hardſhip; could I when my dear Charles paid his (as we thought) farewel viſit to Bellefield, have been able to develope the intricacies of futurity, could I have known how fatally he was to be prevented in his attendance on Lord Rockſdale, and at the time have ſeen him in the different ſituations he has been in; I muſt have ſunk under the agonies of mind I ſhould have experienced, and the paſſing bell would long ere this have tolled for your unhappy Iſabinda. My aunt is but indifferent, the conflicting paſſions ſhe was tortured with, during the examination of the letters, has been too much, as ſhe this morning told me for her time of life; but I can plainly ſee another cauſe, which is ſtill more the occaſion of her indiſpoſition; ſhe fears my dear mother will get intelligence of Charles's being ſtill in England; inſtead of forwarding each party of pleaſure, as ſhe uſed to do, ſhe puts the negative on all, and as my mother ſaid, but a few days ago, "ſurely one would think ſomething very terrible had happened to my ſiſter, ſhe is ſome how different from what ſhe uſed to be; and you my child, ſeem equally to ſhun our neighbours; formerly it uſed to be thought a difficulty to get me into ſociety, but now I am for ever propoſing viſits, and am refuſed in all." Indeed, 'tis very true; I am not happy, Leonora, every ſtrange voice I hear in the houſe alarms me; each horſeman that rides up the avenue engages my attention from the inſtant I can diſtinguiſh him, and yeſterday, while at dinner, hearing a loud ring at the gate, I ſtarted up and flew like lightning to the front of the houſe, to ſee who it was; my aunt reproved me, when my mother left the room, but I am not miſtreſs of my feelings, indeed, I am not, and if ſomething is not ſpeedily done to lead towards a diſcovery, I ſhall certainly betray all. Surely my

brother

brother will ſoon be well enough to ſtand the ſhock of meeting us, and Lucerne will then be brought to yield to the revealing of it; my aunt has given him her promiſe to do nothing in the affair without his knowledge; but as this muſt be left to time, I will endeavour to turn my thoughts to other ſubjects. The workmen are got into Springwood Caſtle, Lord Portſdown's ſteward is come down to ſuperintend them; Caroline and I paſſed it yeſterday, it is ſuch a ſeat of confuſion you would hardly know your native place again; great alterations are making as we hear, and it is to be finiſhed in a moſt ſuperb ſtyle. My mother is not at all delighted at the thoughts of her new neighbours, for though we do not intend to preſume ſo far as to viſit them, yet they may be, as ſhe ſays, very troubleſome to us; "the great are very apt to look upon people in the middle ſtation of life," ſaid ſhe to my aunt, "in that ſtile of inferiority, which makes them imagine they are to ſubmit to any encroachments they pleaſe; the front of our houſe is at ſuch a diſtance from them, as to prevent any diſagreeable meetings, but the back way to the village is rendered ſo near us by the help of the draw bridge, that it will be impoſſible to avoid an intercourſe either with them or their ſervants; I ſhall therefore order it to be nailed up, or elſe keep the key of the padlock in my own pocket; during their ſtay in theſe parts." My aunt, low as her ſpirits are, could not help ſmiling, "well," replied ſhe, "ſiſter, it muſt be ſaid you are carefulneſs itſelf; in Mr. Aſhton's life time I know you was very much in the great world, and experienced the fallacy of their civilities; they ſay forewarned is fore-armed, and you are determined to conſider the matter in time; as I underſtand they do not mean to be here if they could, before July, and the repairs and improvements, they intend to make, will take at leaſt a quarter of a year in compleating, which will bring it very near that time, I muſt ſay

I think you may reſt ſatisfied for the preſent, as they cannot arrive ſooner than they purpoſe." "I wiſh with all my heart," returned my mother, "they had never thought of coming here at all; they will entirely ſpoil the rural ſimplicity, and innocence of our little village, and when that is gone, it will have no charms for me." Adieu, my love.

LETTER XXIV.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

I HAVE, my deareſt Iſabinda, read over and over the various letters contained in the packet, you favoured me with; and cannot tell whether to lament your brother's follies, or to admire Lord Rockſdale moſt. Worthieſt of men, may every future period of your life be marked with bliſs! may nothing intervene to cloud over that ſerenity, which marks your every word and action! and may the ſenſible and good natured Lucerne, meet with that felicity hereafter, which I fear will not be his lot while in this world! Sir Edward Beemont likewiſe, attracts a great ſhare of my admiration; and, it is with concern I reflect, that his firſt introduction to our notice, was in the apartments of an Eſtifania You aſk me if I do not think your brother's ſufferings have counterbalanced his faults; you muſt pardon me, my dear, if I ſay, his errors, in my mind, greatly weigh down the ſcale: I could expatiate very largely upon the ſubject, but as that has been already done, with much greater eloquence than I am miſtreſs of, ſhall only tell you, though

though I think his faults can admit of no extenuation, yet, I am exceedingly happy to find he has ſuffered no more: and, cruel as you think his puniſhments have been, you have no reaſon to regret the chaſtiſements of Providence, in the preſent pleaſing proſpect of his amendment: the diſcovery of the affair, to his worthy parent, muſt be left to an all wiſe being, ever watchful over our actions; he will order the events leading to it, according to his Almighty will; I ſhall be truly rejoiced, to hear it has been effected without detriment to the tendereſt of mothers. Mrs. Danvers's indiſpoſition gives me concern, but ſhe will ſoon ſhake it off; what muſt her feelings be to Mrs. Aſhton's, upon this occaſion? And now, my love, (as you very often give me the flattering title of being your monitor,) let me entreat you to ſummons up a little reſolution; do not let every whiſtling wind, and barking of the village dogs, alarm you; you have a mother, whoſe feelings are exquiſitely delicate as your own, the fond, the watchful parent, will very ſoon perceive the inward ſtruggles of her Iſabinda; without being able to aſſign a cauſe for the alteration, which will be too viſible, you muſt render her unhappy, and the tongue of my friend would be the moſt improper of all, to unfold the dreadful tale. The inſipid round of cards, dreſs, and public diverſions, ſtill (as you may imagine) continues in Lady Morgan's houſe, who can ſuppoſe it will ever ceaſe. I was this morning ſitting, before breakfaſt, in a ſmall parlour behind my uncle's library, which is appropriated to Letitia and I; here we can now and then enjoy a little rational converſation, here we receive the morning viſits of our young friends, and here, if Lady Morgan is either abroad or at her toilet, amuſe ourſelves with working and reading; a book that I had begun the day before, which appeared very intereſting, had drawn me there before the uſual hour; I ſeated myſelf by the fire-ſide, and was deeply engaged in

perusing it, when the door opened, and George Morgan came into the room; as this was the first tête à tête we had ever since his arrival, and I knew so-much of the family affairs, I believe I rather appeared disconcerted at his entrance; for, coming up to the table where I sat, he, in a very polite manner, apologized for his intrusion, and ended with saying, as he was fearful he had detained me from a more agreeable amusement, than his conversation could possibly afford, he would withdraw; common politeness, had I not respected this worthy young man, would have obliged me to detain him, and he seated himself on the opposite side of the fire: I thought he appeared very grave, but, as it is his natural turn, was not at all struck with it, till happening to cast my eyes on him, in answering some question he had asked, I perceived a very great alteration in his face; his pale looks and haggard countenance, very plainly shewed (as I thought,) he had had a sleepless night, for I could not attribute them to late hours, as he is most commonly of our parties; and if not, is always at home by twelve. "You are not well, Mr. Morgan," said I, "what is the matter with you?" "I am indeed" said he, "but very indifferent," with a sigh he could not suppress; "a London life, I believe, does not agree with me; the continual round of diversions my mother chooses me to attend her to; is ill-suited either to my state or constitution; used as I have been, for some time past, to clearer air, and serener society, I cannot relish the hurry of a crowded card-room, and the heat, very often, almost overcomes me." "And you expect I suppose," answered I, smiling, "that I am implicitly to believe what you say, and that the alteration so very visible since last night, is caused by the effects you mention:" he coloured, and sat for some time with his eyes fixed on the fire; at last, "I do not," said he, "my dear cousin, expect a woman of your sense, to give credit to the frivolous excuses I have made;

made; I am not indeed, fond of cards, and diſlike a crowded room, but they are evils I could put up with for ever, in obedience to my mother; the minutiæ of life, are of very little ſignificance, but it requires the greateſt philoſophy, to bear the unforeſeen calamities, we poor mortals often experience. Oh, Leonora, I am the moſt unhappy of men, and have not a friend I ought to confide enough in, to tell the diſmal tale to. I would not ſhock my Letitia with the recital, and my lips ſhall never, out of this houſe, utter a ſyllable of it to any body." "Well then," replied I, "George, at leaſt I am not excepted, I am an inmate here, confide in me; grief leſſens by participation, and you ſhall not leave me uninformed of the corroding care, which ſits ſo heavy on you." "How kind, how very kind, my amiable Leonora," ſaid he, "is the injunction you lay on me, I hardly know how to diſcloſe the misfortune, even to you; but there are fatal reaſons which oblige me, in honor, not to conceal it from you; and yet," ſaid he, riſing, and going to the window, to hide the emotion he was in; "can I, ought I, to reveal the failings of thoſe, whoſe ſlighteſt faults, I am bound both by duty and affection to conceal:" this latter part was ſaid in a low voice, he imagined I had not heard it; very luckily for him I did; torn by conflicting paſſions, he muſt have ſuffered dreadfully, had he not communicated the ſecret to ſome one; his laſt words let me into the whole affair. Convinced that I run no riſk in what I was going to ſay; "for heaven's ſake, couſin," replied I, "let us come to an explanation, we may be interrupted; reſume your ſeat let me beg of you, and I will pave the way for you." He left the window directly, with the greateſt conſternation in his looks, and drew his chair cloſe to the table. "The misfortune you ſo much lament," reſumed I, "I am no ſtranger to: you lament the fatal errors of a father:" he would have ſpoke, but was ſo agitated he could

not; "you lament the pernicious cuſtom ſo fatal to thouſands, who frequent a gaming-table," "Say likewiſe," ſaid he, interrupting me here, "that I lament us all; and you my lovely Leonora, is your innocence to fall a ſacrifice, (taking hold of my hand acroſs the table)? "Loſe not a thought on me, thou amiable young man," cried I, "I have reaſon to think my fortune will be ſecure; but tell me, how you have diſcovered this ſhocking propenſity of your father's." "Thank heaven," replied he, "if you are ſafe; I could not bear to ſee you involved in the ruin which I fear will ſhortly attend our family; this morning I waked juſt at day break, and finding myſelf not quite well, got up, threw on my looſe gown, and ſlipt my feet into my ſlippers, walking about the room for ſome time, to try to get the better of my indiſpoſition; and as I heard no body ſtirring, thought I would open my door into the paſſage, by way of a little refreſhment; the chamber oppoſite to mine is uninhabited, and ſeeing the door open, I went in, unbarred one of the windows, and was looking into the ſtreet, when I perceived my father's chariot ſtop at the door; amazed at the ſight, I ſtood like one petrified, the footman rung at the bell, inſtantly my father got out, and haſtily entered the houſe: I conſidered for a few minutes what I ſhould do, and was going down exactly as I was to enquire what had happened, when I heard him go into his bed-chamber very ſoftly, and bolt the door. I returned immediately into my own room, and dreſſing myſelf directly, went down the back ſtairs, as the great ſtaircaſe would have led me cloſe by my father's apartment; I found Williams in his maſter's dreſſing room; he ſtarted when he ſaw me; "for God's ſake, Williams," ſaid I, "where has my father been all night? ſome thing very unexpected muſt have happened to keep him to this hour: I know he moſt commonly ſups at a club, but I underſtand he is always at home between one

one and two." Williams, good man, ſhook his head; I was a great while before I could get him to ſpeak, but after frequently urging him, he confeſſed that my father was then come from one of the curſed gaming houſes in St. James's ſtreet; that he never returned till that hour every morning, and that he was afraid by his maſter's manner he had lately loſt a conſiderable ſum of money. During our converſation there were repeated ſingle knocks at the door, after the two or three firſt, my curioſity prompted me to aſk Williams, what was the reaſon of them; "Alas, Sir," ſaid he, "I would not wiſh to diſtreſs you more than I have already done, but theſe are all creditors who wiſh to make enquiries of me, what time Sir John can be ſpoken to." "Think, Leonora, think what was my diſtraction? I have not been at home above three weeks, and have already learnt the ruin of my father." I gave him what conſolation I could; but as breakfaſt time drew near, thought it beſt for us to ſeparate. Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

I WRITE again, my Iſabinda, as I know your feeling heart will greatly intereſt itſelf for us all. Things, however, are not ſo bad as I had at firſt reaſon to imagine. Manſel, Sir John's ſteward, was in town this morning; as George Morgan was croſſing the hall betwixt one and two, to go out, Williams met him, and whiſpered him, that the ſteward was but juſt gone. I told him my fears

about my maſter, "but thank God, Sir," ſaid he, "though bad enough, it is not ſo deſperate as I thought." Mr. Manſel, indeed, ſays, "that if Sir John goes on, as he has done, for theſe laſt three years, he is fearful that as many more will entirely compleat his ruin; that he has already mortgaged one-third of his eſtates, but that he—(that is Manſel,) is at preſent pretty well off, as to caſh, and he had come to bring a part of what he had in his hands (by Sir John's orders) this day: I am ſorry, Sir, however to tell you," continued Williams, "that Manſel did not come out my maſter's library with the ſame chearful countenance as he went in: he looked very grave, and ſhrugging up his ſhoulders, told me, that Sir John had required the whole of him, and ſeemed very deſirous of having it directly, but did not mention any thing to him of wanting more money to be raiſed." Williams has ſince told George, that as ſoon as he went out, he attended his maſter in the library, and mentioned to him the demands which he had that morning for money, and that it was abſolutely neceſſary thoſe trades-people ſhould be paid; that his maſter appeared in much better ſpirits than he had ſeen for this week paſt, and aſked him how much the whole that he wanted to diſcharge the whole debts would amount to; "I told him," ſaid Williams, "that about four hundred pounds would be ſufficient for the moſt preſſing," and he immediately gave me notes to the value of that ſum; my couſin took an opportunity of telling me this, juſt before we went to dinner; and we imagine, by my uncle's readineſs to part with the bank-notes to Williams, that he finds more money in his ſteward's hands than he expected; he is ſafe, I believe, for this time; but, alas! what ſecurity is there for a gameſter?—one evening often determines his fate! Whether Sir John is unable to go to the club again, till he has had a ſecond viſit from his ſteward, or for what

reaſon

reaſon I cannot tell, but while we were at dinner, he appeared very chearful, and Lady Morgan having mentioned, that we were going to a ball in the evening, at Sir Harry Sanderſon's, he, to the very great ſurprize of us all, declared his intentions of being of the party; it was an offer, you may be aſſured, was accepted of, with the greateſt pleaſure. I thought his amiable ſon would have gone wild with joy—he was in ecſtacies; "Permit me, Sir," ſaid he, to teſtify the ſatisfaction your propoſal has given me; ah! how happy ſhould I be, if my dear father would honor us ſo far, as to be every evening of our parties." Sir John caſt an affectionate look at him, it was indeed not poſſible to do otherwiſe; but I fear George will find, for all that, it is a ſtring he muſt touch but tenderly; I know my uncle a great deal better than he does; perhaps ſome myſtery attends his going with us this evening; I ſhall have my eyes on him the whole night, I promiſe him, for I will unravel it, if in my power ſo to do: however, thank heaven, (as George whiſpered me), he cannot be at his gaming-club to-night. I have this inſtant received the long expected note from Mr. Hartley, he deſires to ſee me to-morrow as ſoon as I can after breakfaſt, as he purpoſes quitting the town the beginning of next week;—worthy, good old man! I will attend your ſummons. Think, Iſabinda, with all theſe weighty cares upon me, how I ſhall be able to dance to-night, I am not in ſpirits, but cannot be in the leaſt ſurpriſed at it.

LEONORA in continuation.

We did not return till about five this morn: I went to bed, but could not ſleep, and am riſen again and dreſſed, though the clock has not yet ſtruck nine: I ſhall have therefore time enough before Lady Morgan is ſtirring, to give you an account of our laſt night's amuſement. My uncle came up to us in the drawing-room a little before ten, he was very handſomely dreſſed, and made an exceeding genteel appearance, he is really a fine man, and has a look of grandeur about him, that is exceedingly ſtriking; I thought his ſon would never have taken his eyes off him: George Morgan, always elegant, always agreeable, was peculiarly ſo yeſterday evening. Letitia dreſſed with the greateſt ſimplicity: white clear muſlin chemiſe over a white ſattin body and petticoat, her head adorned with white plumes, and a great quantity of pearls in her fine dark hair, which has never yet had a duſt of powder in it, formed a moſt agreeable contraſt; ſhe looked very pretty; white is certainly peculiarly becoming to thoſe olive beauties, and the ſimplicity and light flow of the muſlin chemiſe, ſuited her little figure entirely: ſhe wanted nothing but a ſmall quantity of Lady Morgan's rouge, (which ſhe could very well have ſpared), to have made her quite captivating: I have (I am aſhamed to ſay it) often heard her mother argue with her on that topic, but to no purpoſe, as the dear innocent girl looks with abhorrence on that abominable cuſtom. My aunt, in a poppy coloured ſattin gown (decorated with white ſattin ribbons), open before, white ſattin petticoat, laced apron underneath the gown, head adorned (oh! ſhame to ſay it) with feathers, interſperſed with a great quantity

quantity of diamonds, necklace and ear-rings of the ſame, which are indeed very fine, would have looked remarkably well for her, if ſhe had not added to her prodigious rotundity, by wearing a very broad white ſattin ſaſh, which was faſtened with a remarkable handſome diamond claſp.—Your Leonora, tho' laſt, I hope not leaſt, beloved by you, being, as well as Miſs Morgan, rather of the dark hue, preferred pink ornaments, by way of ſetting off her complexion, pink ſattin jacket and petticoat poloneſed in front with white crape, and drawn back in plaits, at the waiſt with diamond buttons and loops, long ſleeves interſperſed ſlightly with crape, and a crape flounce to the petticoat very deep, and feſtooned up or each ſide, before and behind, with diamond bows, powdered hair, and a wreath of pink and white flowers, interſperſed with diamonds, (like Julius Cæſar's laurels,) bound my head: the diamonds, Iſabinda, I believe you have never ſeen, but Mrs. Aſhton muſt remember them; they were my poor mother's, and are very good ones, for my dear father, I have been often told delighted in ſeeing her fine; I had likewiſe a pair of ſmall drops in my ears. Thus dreſſed, we arrived in high good humour at Lady Sanderſon's, in Portman-ſquare, a little after ten; there was a moſt brilliant appearance, the apartments very fine, lighted and decorated moſt elegantly. We had been but a few minutes in the room, when George Morgan came and whiſpered me with an air of concern, that he had fully intended aſking the honour of my hand for the evening, but that his father had told him, he had provided a partner for him; and deſired him to tell me, that he ſhould be obliged to me not to engage myſelf without his knowledge: ſo thought I, are you thereabouts, my good uncle, you do not mean to abſent yourſelf from St. James's-ſtreet to-night for nothing I fancy. I muſt own

I was

I was a little chagrined as well as George; for ſince his arrival, I have danced at every ball we have been at with him; he is a moſt excellent performer, and beſides that, it keeps me in ſome meaſure out of the reach of a certain ſet of ſervile fortune-hunters, that teize one to death with their impertinent flattery: wherever I go throngs of beaus attend my ſteps; the adulation paid to riches in every public place, or private party awaits your friend; four or five different offers have been already refuſed ſince I entered into my twentieth year, and all becauſe they know I am in a ſhort time to be miſtreſs of ſixty or ſeventy thouſand pounds: was it not for that circumſtance, the throng of flatterers would turn their ſteps another way; the adulation would never have attended me; I might have ſat in a corner the whole evening, without any well-dreſſed man being diſpoſed to aſk me to dance, and perhaps if poor, have remained my whole life without one offer of marriage. But to return to my ſubject.—Mr. Morgan had ſcarce left me, when my uncle, wading through the buzz that ſurrounded me, preſented a little effeminate figure to me, which I had never before ſeen, dreſſed in ſcarlet and gold; and told me, that if I was not engaged, Lord Daffodil begged to have the honour of dancing with me: as I was determined Sir John ſhould have his way, I inſtantly curtſeyed aſſent, to the no ſmall diſappointment of the herd of coxcombs that ſurrounded me; and upon taking my place, found, as I was going down the dance, that my uncle had joined his ſon to a Miſs Fogworth, only daughter and heireſs of a rich citizen, who was to have an immenſe fortune; the elegance of George, and the unwieldy clumſineſs of his ſhort partner, was fine food for ſatire among the wits in the room. Letitia was the only one of the party who had reaſon to be content, as Sir John did not interfere with her,

her, and ſhe danced with Major Waltham. You would have been aſtoniſhed, had you heard the rhetoric of my little beau; the charms of Venus herſelf were inferior to thoſe of the lovely Miſs Fenbrook, Minerva's ſenſe fell ſhort in every word ſhe uttered; and Juno, imperial dame, though wife of Jove, was infinitely excelled by her in every grace and geſture: I, for my part, heeded not a word he ſaid, but ſtill danced on, till I had ſo thoroughly tired his Lordſhip, that I believe he was heartily glad when ſupper came to his relief: as ſoon as that was over, I began my career again, and never left off, till the ball broke up. When fatigued and jaded to death, he handed me to the coach, and took his leave.

LETTER XXVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I HAD a little converſation with George Morgan yeſterday morning before breakfaſt, relative to the laſt night's ball: he joined Letitia and I in our parlour ſoon after we came down. After admiring the magnificence of Sir Harry's houſe and furniture, the elegance of the ſupper, and the propriety with which every thing was conducted, I aſked him how he liked his partner?—"Leonora," ſaid he, "name her not; I never paſſed ſo diſagreeable an evening in my life; and nothing but her being a recommendation of my father's could have prevented my complaining of a bad head-ach, as an excuſe for leaving off dancing." "You would certainly," replied I,

"in

" in that caſe, have enjoyed the pleaſure of her converſation more fully, and perhaps the deficiency of perſonal graces are amply ſupplied by her mental qualifications." " I cannot ſay," returned he, ſmiling, " which can be ſaid to be the moſt captivating: I reckon myſelf quite as good a judge of one as the other, for my eyes and ears had both their fill, I promiſe you; as the volubility the Lady is miſtreſs of, hardly gave me an opportunity to put in a word: I will give you a little ſpecimen of her converſation, and leave you and my ſiſter to make your comments upon it; ſhe was quite delighted with every thing ſhe ſaw, and was particularly ſtruck with the elegance of the ladies' dreſſes: " I vow," ſaid ſhe, " I cannot tell how it is, but every body appears to me remarkably ſmart to-night; there is certainly ſomething particularly clever in this end of the town; I declare, the company here, ſurpaſſes any thing I have ever yet ſeen, tho' I do aſſure you, Pappa lets me about a great deal, notwithſtanding I am but juſt turned of ſeventeen; and as to the ſupper (continued ſhe) it is far beyond that I partook of laſt week in Monument-yard; nay, I think it even ſuperior to the entertainment we had about a month ago, at Mrs. Raiſin's, the grocer's wife, in Cateaton ſtreet.— She ran on," continued George, " in this manner the whole time, and at parting, gave me a very preſſing invitation to Philpot-lane, told me her papa, ſhe was ſure, would be heartily glad to ſee me; that ſhe had ſpent a very merry evening, and was exceedingly ſorry the ball was over." As Letitia and I had met with her once before at Lady Sanderſon's, we were not at all ſurpriſed at this account of her: what a dreadful thing is the loſs of a mother to a girl of ſeven years old, when the father is not endued with proper talents to ſupply her place; and how different has my honoured parents conduct been, on that trying occaſion,

occaſion, to Mr. Fogworth's. Amazing! that a man ſhould take ſuch pains to enrich himſelf, (riſing early and ſitting up late for that purpoſe,) and at the ſame time, leave his only child ſo totally neglected, as to the cultivation of that ſo much more ineſtimable treaſure, her mind; awkward in every motion, vulgar in her expreſſions, her dreſs ill choſen, and worſe put on; what a pretty figure will ſhe ſometime hence make in the polite circles, when joined to a faſhionable man at this end of the town; for I underſtand her father's vanity and folly are ſo great, that he is determined not to match her under a title, and ſays he cares not, if her future huſband has not a ſixpenny piece, as Doll will have enough for both: it was for this reaſon, my wiſe uncle made his appearance at Lady Sanderſon's ball, I dare anſwer for it, and am likewiſe as certain, that he has let Lady Morgan into the ſecret, as I obſerved yeſterday, that though her ladyſhip ſatirized ſeveral others of the ſet, ſhe made not one exception to her ſon's partner, which ſhe moſt aſſuredly would have done, had ſhe not been checked by very particular reaſons; I have not, however, mentioned my ſuſpicions either to Mr. Morgan, or his ſiſter; it will be time enough for him (poor young man) to be informed of it, when things come to an explanation. As ſoon as breakfaſt was over I left the room, and told Letitia, as I had ſome buſineſs with Mrs. La Chevre (our miliner), I was going to call upon her that morning; I knew ſhe was engaged at home, which would prevent her accompanying me. I ſtept up ſtairs as faſt as poſſible, ſlipt on my cloak, and haſtened to Bond-ſtreet, where my good friend Mr. Hartley lodges. He was ſitting by a table when I came in, and appeared to have been writing: he aroſe to receive me with the greateſt affection, and very politely thanked me for the honor I did him. "I ſhould not, my dear

Miſs

Miſs Fenbrook," ſaid he, as ſoon as I was ſeated, "have requeſted this favour of you, if it had not been abſolutely neceſſary to make you acquainted with ſome circumſtances relating to your uncle, which you perhaps have not been apprized of: the ſtrict friendſhip which ſubſiſted betwixt your father and me, from the very firſt of our acquaintance, to the hour of his death, I have transferred to his amiable daughter: I ſhould indeed regard it as an utter violation of the tender amity, which may be ſaid to have intwined that beſt of friends and I together, if I did not look upon his offspring as my own: from that melancholy period I have had a watchful eye over Sir John's conduct—his midnight haunts are not unknown to me: do you know, child," ſaid he, abruptly, (laying his hand on mine) "that your uncle is undone! I anſwered, "that I hoped things were not quite ſo bad;" and then related to him what Williams hath informed Mr. Morgan of, the morning before; he ſhook his head: "Manſel," ſaid he, "is a very honeſt fellow: I have known him for many years, but neither he, nor Sir John's butler, can anſwer for any thing further than what paſſes thro' their hands; I have not the leaſt doubt of the ſteward's account with regard to the eſtates being perfectly juſt, but he is not acquainted with the ſecret debts of honor the Baronet has contracted. Did you ever," ſaid he, with great quickneſs, "ſee Lord Daffodil?" "Never before yeſterday evening," returned I, "when I danced with him, through Sir John's recommendation." "Danced with the ſqueaking puppy," returned he, in great agitation. "Where?" "At Sir Harry Sanderſon's, Sir." "Oh, that's another of the club," cried he, with an indignant ſmile, "your uncle is pretty deep there too: what," continued he, "did Sir John go with you to the ball?" "Yes," replied I, "and introduced his Lordſhip to me for a partner; at the

the ſame time, requeſting his ſon to dance with Miſs Fogworth." "What, Fogworth's daughter of the city?" I anſwered in the affirmative. "Well," ſaid he, "this is a fine ſcheme, upon my word; and I hope old Timothy made his appearance there too—" "If you mean Mr. Fogworth, Sir, he was not there," replied I. "I am ſorry for it, he, would have made a pretty figure in his white bob-wig, and claret-coloured cloaths, amongſt you all," returned he. "But I cannot think how the devil they prevailed on Lady Sanderſon, to admit his aukward daughter to be of the party; I am ſure it muſt have required ſome conjuration to prevail on her." "It is not the firſt time of our meeting Miſs Fogworth there," anſwered I, "though ſhe was an entire ſtranger to George Morgan till laſt night." "The Baronet is hard puſhed, faith," retorted he; "I fear it is worſe with him, than I thought for; and now, Leonora, I will, as far as I can, unravel this whole affair to you: infamous fellow," cried he, with great heat, "is it thus you intend paying the twenty thouſand pounds you loſt to Daffodil about a week ago? Is your ſiſter's daughter to be made a ſacrifice of to a monkey, who has, I dare ſay, readily entered into a compromiſe, to give it up, for a fine young woman and ſeventy thouſand? I ſay, is ſhe to be ſacrifi ed, becauſe your inſatiate thirſt for gaming can never be ſatisfied? You muſt know, my dear child, that your worthy uncle has been, as his ſon informed you, very unfortunate lately: I have my ſpies placed about him, therefore, whether in town or country, I am thoroughly informed of his tranſactions. Let me ſee, twenty thouſand to the before-mentioned Peer, ten at leaſt to Sir Harry, and as to old Fogworth, (who you are likewiſe to know follows more trades than one, having got a very good fortune by an indefatigable attendance on buſineſs, which he has increaſed

creaſed to an immenſe one, by uſury), it is hardly poſſible to know how much Sir John is indebted to him; but to my certain knowledge, the yearly intereſt, which he receives from your uncle, amounts to a very great ſum: we may ſet theſe three down at leaſt at fifty thouſand pounds; and you find, by what his ſon told you, he is deeply in, for even the common neceſſaries of life. I had not ſeen George Morgan for ſome years 'till that day I dined in Harley-ſtreet, and by his appearance, think him a very unfit perſon to be united to the Fogworth family, which is his father's preſent deſire I am ſure; but that I have nothing to do with; my whole thoughts in the affair are centered in you, Leonora. Sir John has never wiſhed you to ſign any thing, has he?" "Nothing, Sir," returned I, "but the receipts for my quarterly allowance, which I have always, by Mrs. Aſhton's advice, looked over firſt." "I am glad," ſaid he, "you have been ſo careful; I fear his principles are bad enough, to inſert a much larger ſum than he advances, which might occaſion ſome trouble by and by; not that he could defraud you, was he inclined to it, as you may chooſe, when you come of age, whether you will repay what has been expended, more than your father appropriated for you during your minority. You come of age the beginning of December, I think." "Yes, Sir," "Well then," ſaid he, "ſhould Sir John come to town before that period, write me word of it directly; I had juſt finiſhed a direction to my habitation in the country, as you arrived; there it is, (continued he, giving it to me) if he can ſtand it till the time for his departure to Morgan-hall, where I know he always reſides during the ſummer, we ſhall do very well; but as he muſt be in town previous to his ſettlement with you, I wiſh to get at him before he can have involved himſelf with his curſed club again. But," ſaid he, preſſing my hand

hand tenderly, "ſhould any thing unfortunate happen to him, before you are out of his hands, remember what I tell you; I inſiſt upon your quitting his houſe directly; take a poſt-chaiſe and come to me, my worthy friend's daughter will be always welcome; and my wife, who is as good a woman as ever was born, will I know, take the greateſt pleaſure in accommodating any friend of mine: you don't know," ſaid he, "Leonora, how happy you would make us, could you bring yourſelf to take up your reſidence with a couple of old folks; however, that is not to be thought of at preſent (but upon an emergency,) as I would, by all means, have you remain with your uncle, if poſſible, till you come of age." I thanked him very ſincerely, for the great kindneſs he had ſhewed me; we had a good deal more converſation, which, as I have given you the moſt material part, I ſhall omit: and parted with the greateſt marks of friendſhip, on both ſides. Juſt as I was going out of the room, he called me back again; "remember, Leonora," ſaid he, "my injunctions: and there is another thing I have to ſay to you, laughing as he ſpoke, as you do not ſeem to be deeply ſmitten with the recommended peer, let me entreat you not to think of being Lady Daffodil." I told him, "I could eaſily promiſe that," and returned home with an heavy heart; my uncle is certainly undone, Iſabinda; what will become of his family? Adieu, my love.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

We are all greatly concerned, my Leonora, at the contents of your laſt letters: but as Mr. Hartley is certainly a very valuable friend, we hope, ſhould any thing unfortunate happen, he will be able to extricate you, from the ruin which threatens the reſt of Sir John's family; ſhould the expected confuſion ariſe, ſurely, my love, you would not think of any other habitation but ours: with what delight would you be received at Bellefield; I, for my own part, could hardly (I am aſhamed to ſay it) bewail, as I ought, the calamity, which would again reſtore my more than ſiſter to me. My aunt's ſpirits are greatly mended, ſhe deſires me to relive your fears concerning Mr. Morgan, as ſhe now recollects, that he will not be left totally deſtitute, ſhould his imprudent father ſink under the misfortunes he has himſelf occaſioned; three hundred a year, you will ſay, is but a ſcanty pittance, compared to the very great fortune he had reaſon to expect, one time or other, to be poſſeſſed of; but it is ſurely a proviſion for him; for which, he may thank his grandmother, Mrs. Mordaunt. My aunt ſays, Sir John was extremely angry, at his ſon's being left, even ſo little, an eſtate, independent of him, as he is to enjoy it, at the age of one and twenty: Letitia is likewiſe, in a ſmall degree, provided for by her grandmother; ſhe has left her five thouſand pounds, at the death of Lady Morgan, whoſe jointure is very large; beſides the intereſt of the aforeſaid ſum, during her life, which does not ſo much as go through Sir John's hands, when ſhe receives it;

admire,

admire, my friend, with me, the diſpenſations of Providence; ſeldom, how very ſeldom, do the innocent, even in this life, totally ſuffer for the crimes of the guilty; not, but they muſt be very much ſtraitened, as long as Sir John lives, ſhould he be undone; Lady Morgan's preſent allowance, beſide the intereſt of the five thouſand pounds, is great, (independent of her huſband); but in that caſe, it will be all (except what is left Mr. Morgan), they will have to truſt to: we will, however, hope your uncle, though on the verge of deſtruction, will not purſue his fatal folly to the utmoſt. My mother likewiſe, deſires me to acquaint you, that you may entirely rely on Mr. Hartley; ſhe ſays, ſhe has no perſonal knowledge of him, but has often heard your father mention him in the higheſt terms, and that his general character is a remarkably good one. God proſper you, my dear, and may it pleaſe his Almighty will, not to involve you in thoſe evils, which at preſent ſeem ſo heavily to threaten your uncle. Lucerne has had a long converſation with Mrs. Danvers: they have agreed, that he is minutely to examine every letter he receives from my brother; and if he finds the leaſt danger of a relapſe into any of his former follies, my aunt is to be acquainted with it directly, and then Lucerne will agree to her diſcloſing the ſecret to my mother, in whatever manner ſhe thinks proper: may heaven avert any return of the kind we have lately experienced; a young man may, through giddineſs or inadvertency, miſled by the vivacity of youth, and ſtrong allurements of pleaſure, be once deceived; but after what poor Charles has ſuffered, he muſt be depraved indeed, ſhould he err a ſecond time: but I will not give way to ſuch melancholy thoughts. Write to me, my dear Leonora; our time here paſſes with that exact ſimilitude, that I have no new occurrences to entertain

tain you with; continue, therefore, your pleaſing narrative, ſo amuſing to us all, if we were thoroughly diveſted of our fears for the future. God grant a happy iſſue.

LETTER XXVIII.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

My utmoſt thanks await my ever valuable friend, for her kind offer, and wiſhes on my account; I believe you will think me ſincere, when I ſay, no ſituation on earth could afford me the happineſs, which the ſociety at Bellefield could adminiſter to me; but I am fixed in my determination, Iſabinda: I will remain under my uncle's roof, if poſſible, till I am of age; and will rely on Mr. Hartley's good offices and Providence, for the reſt. The account you give me of the proviſion (though a ſlender one to what they might have expected), which Mrs. Mordaunt has made for her grandchildren, has given me great comfort; it appears to me, ſhe ſtrongly ſuſpected Sir John's fatal propenſity, even when he married her daughter; for, I am told, the allowance which ſhe inſiſted upon for her, independent of him, during his life, had very near hindered the match; but ſhe was ſtrenous in it, and had it ſecured to Lady Morgan, as ſtrong as poſſible. My uncle appears exceedingly gay and unconcerned; his ſchemes will have had one good effect however, as they have kept him ſeveral nights from the Club already: Lord Daffodil almoſt lives here, and whenever he honors us with his company any where, of an even-

ing,

ing, Sir John is always of the party; I ſuppoſe he is afraid of leaving him entirely to his flippant niece, and he has a good deal of reaſon; for, if my uncle's back is turned, I always plague him moſt heartily. The Fogworth's have likewiſe dined with us ſince the ball; I believe Sir John was in hopes of making his eſcape that evening, as he imagined they would have taken early leave; no ſuch matter, my dear, I aſſure you; for old Timothy (as Mr. Hartley calls him) declared, while we were at tea, his intention of ſpending the evening with us; telling Lady Morgan, he had managed matters accordingly; for where he dined, he always ſupped; I ſuppoſe we are to undergo the ſame penance when we return the viſit, which is to be in three or four days: think of my uncle and aunt's dining and ſupping in Philpot-lane: oh money! money! what faſcinating charms attend thee. I obſerved, my ſweet Lord, was not invited the day they were: I ſuppoſe, Sir John was afraid his ſon would be ſupplanted by a peer of the realm, with old Timothy. I pity poor George, I fancy he begins to ſuſpect his father's intentions, for he was uncommonly grave to Miſs Fogworth, all day; Major Waltham rallied him heartily for the reſpectable diſtance he kept, and told him, that nothing but love, could poſſibly have ſtruck him with ſuch an awe, as had been viſible throughout his whole deportment. When we went up ſtairs, after dinner, "pray Miſs," ſaid ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to me, in a whiſper, "don't you reckon your couſin a very melancholy man? I can't ſay I like him much." "He is rather of a grave turn," replied I; "a grave turn," retorted ſhe. "Yes miſs, I think ſo too, on my conſcience, why he does not talk at all; I am ſure, there is Jacob Lightfoot, Tom Wagſtaff, and indeed, ſeveral of our city beaux, that beat him all to nothing." She would have run on a great deal more, but I prevented her, by changing my place, and

left poor Letitia the burthen of her converſation. I think, however, the ſtupidity of both father and daughter, muſt very ſoon bring things to an eclairciſſement; for I obſerved Sir John and Lady Morgan, were heartily tired of them. We had like to have had a ſad fracas; juſt as we were ſitting down to ſupper, we were ſurpriſed with a loud knock; immediately the parlour door flew open, and Stanton reeled into the room; I have ſeen him very often much intoxicated, but never to the degree he was laſt night; he no ſooner underſtood that Mr. Fogworth was a citizen, than he began to rail at trade, drank confuſion to the Lord-Mayor and all the Aldermen, was extremely abuſive to the poor old man, and ended every one of his remarks, with, "don't you think what I ſay is true, hey! old white wig, hey! hey!" it was impoſſible to help laughing; though ſhocked at ſeeing him in ſuch a condition, I ſat reflecting, how dreadful a thing it was, for a man endowed with rational qualifications to make himſelf a beaſt; the ſick head-ach and nauſeous loathings, which next morning attend exceſſes of this kind, are not an adequate puniſhment for the inſults he has over night offered to others: Fogworth bore it as long as he could, but at laſt grew ſo warm, that Sir John was obliged to part them: and ordered Williams, and one of the footmen to lead Stanton to his carriage. Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

We yeſterday, my dear Iſabinda, returned the Fogworth viſit: no pleaſing day as you may imagine; the only circumſtance which made it tolerable to me, was a certainty of being relieved from Lord Daffodil's company, as I knew very well my uncle would not aſk him to be of that party; though he is now moſt commonly (through Sir John's contrivance, I ſuppoſe,) admitted every where with us; it is very hard upon me, as he is to my mind a moſt diſguſtful creature; vain of his perſon, which does not riſe even to mediocrity; flattered into a belief, (by his humble companions,) that he poſſeſſes, in the higheſt degree, that ſuperficial talent called wit; and proud of honors which he inherits from his anceſtors, he is a perfect compoſition of nonſenſe and folly: in vain do I uſe every effort to let him know I deſpiſe him; in vain do I openly join in the ridicule which is often, (though of a ſuperior rank to moſt,) levelled at him in many of the parties he forces himſelf into; he ſtill perſeveres in following me, and I ſhall never be able to get rid of him, till overtures are made in a formal manner, which will then receive a flat denial from me. But to return to my ſubject: lady Morgan, notwithſtanding her wiſh to cruſh her ſon under the load of riches deſigned for him, appeared very much out of humour at breakfaſt yeſterday morning; Mr. Fogworth had deſired her ladyſhip to be punctually in Philpot lane, by four o'clock, as he dined two hours later than uſual to pleaſe her; "ſhe could not for her part," ſhe ſaid, "bear the thoughts of ſuch a journey on the ſtones, as ſhe was to be obliged to undertake that

day:" "I will obviate that difficulty," ſaid my uncle, "as I intend to order Williams to tell the coachman, I chooſe to go along the new road." "And pray," ſaid ſhe, "how is George to get there? I am ſure it will be impoſſible for me to go five in our carriage, ſuch a length of way." "I ſhould never have thought of ſuch a thing," returned he, "I intended to have taken him with me in my chariot, but I underſtand Major Waltham was very much preſſed by Fogworth to be of the party, I find he intends accompanying us; and the young men have agreed to go together in his carriage." "But I do not ſee how it is poſſible for me to get dreſſed in time," replied ſhe, "it is now paſt one, and I ſuppoſe I muſt be ready to ſet off by a little after three; I cannot for the life of me imagine how any body can think of dining before ſix; but I fancy it will appear to me throughout, as if I was in another region all day. I ſaw the ſtorm ariſing. Sir John's countenance was inſtantly overclouded; he aroſe from the breakfaſt table, and caſting a ſtern look at Lady Morgan, "I do not underſtand," ſaid he, "Madam, what you mean, by this behaviour; you ſeem to raiſe frivolous objections to every thing I chooſe to do; you know it is my wiſh to comply with the invitation you have received from Mr. Fogworth, therefore let us have no more murmurings, but go and conſult your looking glaſs directly, you can very eaſily be ready by a little after three if you chooſe it; remember what I ſay to you, it is my fixt determination that you dine in the city to day, and I will be obeyed:" ſaying this, he went to the door, and was going out, but returning again, "hearke ye, madam," reſumed he, "I not only expect you to be dreſſed with propriety, but to behave ſo too; let me ſee a ſmile upon that face of your's, during the viſit I inſiſt upon your paying, or it ſhall be worſe for you, I promiſe you." He then left the room, flapping the door after him with ſuch violence, that it ſhook the whole

whole houſe, I never Habinda ſaw my uncle in ſuch a rage before; I do verily believe, had ſhe not comply'd, he would have beat her; Lady Morgan was extremely affected, I could not help pitying her, the tears ſtarted, ſhe rung the bell, ordered Johnſon to attend in her dreſſing room immediately, and with viſible reluctance quitted us. After ſhe was gone, Letitia fell a weeping; poor George remained for ſome time with his eyes fixed on the table; I cannot deſcribe the various changes of his countenance; a fatal confirmation of what I ſuppoſe had already occurred to him, ruſhed on him at once; at laſt, "Letitia, Leonora," ſaid he, "what can this mean? I never ſaw my father behave ſo very unkindly to my poor mother before; ſurely this earneſtneſs muſt mean ſomething very particular. Pray heaven it is not as I think; ſhould it be ſo, what a wretch ſhall I be! but however," ſaid he, with ſome heat; "not all my duty, not all my affection for Sir John, could avail; I may be unhappy, but I will never be unjuſt; never, no never, will George Morgan give his hand, where it is impoſſible to beſtow his heart;" He then approached his ſiſter, wiped the tears from her eyes, embraced her with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and with a deep ſigh left us. It was ſome time before I could comfort poor Letitia; ſhe anſwered every effort, with, "My brother, my dear brother, Leonora, what will become of him?" It was not in my power to deny that my fears were ſimilar to her's on the occaſion. The only conſolation I could offer her was, that when my uncle found his ſon ſo entirely averſe to the match as he appeared to be, he muſt of courſe, in a ſhort time, drop all thoughts of ſuch an union; I then remainded her it was time to dreſs, as it would be by no means proper for us to aggravate Sir John's diſpleaſure, which would certainly be the caſe, ſhould he wait a moment. As ſoon as we were ready we went into Lady Morgan's dreſſing-room, ſhe was very near finiſhed; I ob-

ſerved ſhe endeavoured to appear chearful and turned off the ſcene we had lately been a witneſs to, with ſaying, "ſhe pitied poor Sir John, for ſhe could ſee he had as great a diſlike to the City journey as herſelf, but viſits muſt be returned." To be ſhort, Lady Morgan was equipt before the carriage was announced, Sir John came up to us in exceeding good humour at her compliance, the Major arrived at the ſame inſtant, and we all ſet forth on our journey. We got there in very good time, and was complimented by old Timothy (who met us at the bottom of the ſtair-caſe) for being ſo exact, telling us we muſt take up with a firſt floor that day, for as his buſineſs occupied all the lower part of the houſe, he always dined above. Miſs received us at the dining-room door, dreſt as if ſhe was going to the ball; dinner was ſerved immediately in the adjacent room, dark and ſmall, but as there was no other company beſides ourſelves excepting two city ſmarts, we did tolerably well: a profuſion of victuals, well dreſſed, but badly ſet out, and the honours ſtill worſe performed by our kind hoſteſs, who ſtuffed us, or rather attempted to do ſo, as they cram turkeys. Meanwhile Mr. Fogworth enlarged on the merits of each diſh, told us he always marketed himſelf, acquainted us with the price of almoſt every thing at table, expatiated largely on his daughter's peculiar knack at paſtry, informed us ſhe conſtantly made the tarts, cuſtards, and cheeſecakes herſelf, and ſlapping poor George on the ſhoulder (who ſat next him,) aſked him with a facetious grin, if he did not think ſhe would make a very good wife? George coloured like crimſon, and muttered out at laſt that he had not the leaſt doubt of the lady's qualifications. We were given to underſtand on the arrival of the two beaux, that Mr. Lightfoot was the ſon of an eminent Packer, and Mr. Raiſon the offspring of the grocer before mentioned by Miſs Fogworth: I thought Mr. Lightfoot addreſſed that young lady

ſeveral

ſeveral times in a very tender ſtrain, which ſhe ſeemed as tenderly to return, ſome hopes for George; as to Mr. Raiſon, who ſeems to be a very great puppy, (fond I ſuppoſe of the title of your ladyſhip, which he plentifully beſtowed,) he attached himſelf wholly to lady Morgan, ſome recompence let me tell you for her city journey; Letitia and I were, however, very well ſatisfied for the neglect of the two ſtrangers, Major Waltham having contrived to ſeat himſelf betwixt us. When the ladies withdrew (which was not till Mr. Fogworth told his daughter it was high time for us to leave the gentlemen by themſelves;) ſhe again addreſſed herſelf to me: "La Miſs," ſays ſhe, "I think your couſin is ſtill more ſtupid to day than ever, he is enough to put one out of ſpirits only to look at him." "What then, you don't like a grave man," returned I. "No, not I indeed Miſs," replied ſhe, "I love a rattle for my part; you muſt know Iſabinda, Lightfoot's tongue never lays ſtill." But I will not tire your patience any longer with a ſtupid deſcription of this very ſtupid day; tea and coffee, cards, cakes and lemonade, (the lemons as we were told by Mr. Lightfoot, ſqueezed by the fair hands of the inimitable Miſs Fogworth, gave ſuch a particular zeſt to the liquor he was drinking of, that he could compare it to nothing but nectar,) theſe I ſay with a ſupper as profuſe, and as little elegant as the dinner, concluded our entertainment, and we arrived ſafe in Harley-ſtreet, a little after one, all of us I believe heartily tired. Adieu, my friend."

LETTER XXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

WELL, Iſabinda, at length my uncle's fine ſpun plot is unravelled; the morning after we dined in the city, he contrived to turn the converſation on the two ſubjects which moſt engage his attention; I need not name them to you I am ſure; he introduced them by aſking Lady Morgan, how we diſpoſed of ourſelves that evening, and upon her anſwering that we were to be at a private ball at Lady Sturt's; "Oh!" ſaid he, turning to me, "I ſuppoſe you, Leonora, are engaged as uſual to dance with Lord Daffodil." "Indeed, Sir, I am not," replied I very gravely, "and ſo far from it, am determined for the future, if I am not to be permitted to have any other partner, that I will never dance at all." Sir John reddened, "it is high time," continued I, "to acquaint you with my ſentiments on this occaſion; his lordſhip's attention to me muſt be thought very particular by all my acquaintance, as he ſeems to be introduced into every party with us; I cannot think it right for a young woman to give encouragement, when ſhe does not mean to accept of the overtures which may be intended to be made her, and if his overſtrained civilities and compliments tend that way, you certainly Sir, ought, in honor to adviſe him to deſiſt, as it is my fixed reſolution never to marry any man that has not a ſuperior underſtanding to myſelf." I ſaw my uncle was very much chagrined, he bit his lips, and at laſt ſaid, he had nothing to do in the affair, (what a ſtory my dear,) "but indeed Nora, I think you are to blame, in wiſhing to avoid Lord Daffodil's attentions, your fortune is certainly large, but believe me, you will not find it

it ſo eaſy a matter, if you let him ſlip, to clap an earl's coronet on your carriage again." "Neither do I deſire it, Sir," ſaid I, "I look upon the outſide ſhow as very immaterial, my thoughts with regard to matrimony, turn entirely upon the inward content; and as it would be utterly impoſſible for me, to experience an hour of happineſs with a man I thoroughly deſpiſe, the coronet would be a very inſignificant recompence for the load of evils which would attend it." "You take this matter in too ſerious a light, child," returned he, "Lord Daffodil has made no overtures to me of the kind you mention:" "Very likely not," replied I, "and it is my ſincere wiſh he never may, but if he ſhould, you now, Sir, know my thoughts on the ſubject; in the mean time I ſhall moſt aſſuredly refuſe dancing with him any more, which I hope will prevent a further explanation." Sir John muttered ſomething betwixt his teeth of obſtinacy and ſelf will, and then returned this anſwer. "I dare ſay, Leonora, Lord Daffodil could if he choſe it, marry women of much ſuperior fortunes to yours; there is for example, Miſs Fogworth, (who I am certain will have more than twice what you will poſſeſs,) ſhe would not, I fancy, be ſo ridiculous as to refuſe him; apropos, George," ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to his ſon with a very lively air, "what ſay you to that young lady? a hundred and fifty thouſand pounds is no bad marriage portion let me tell you:" "I ſay, Sir," replied Mr. Morgan very reſpectfully, "that I wiſh her every happineſs ſhe can herſelf deſire, with any other man." My uncle's countenance again changed, vexation was very viſible, though he turned it off as quick as poſſible with a forced ſmile; "Hey day," ſaid he, "I think you young folks do not ſeem to be in very complying diſpoſitions to day, it is pity I have not a match to propoſe to Letitia, that ſhe might acquaint me with her objections too! but I give you my word was either of the parties to wiſh for an union, I ſhould

expect very different anſwers from you" "You know my ſentiments, "Sir," replied I, "they are unalterable (and I ſpoke it with great firmneſs;)" and as to mine, Sir, "ſaid George in a tremulous voice, "I ſhould be very ſorry to be put to the trial; the affection, the duty, which is your due from me, and which you entirely poſſeſs, would induce me readily to ſacrifice my life for you, but marriage is a very different affair; as I never would unite myſelf to any woman without your conſent, I ſhould hope my father in return would not enforce what muſt make me miſerable for ever; Miſs Fogworth may be very amiable, but ſhe does not appear to be a wife in the leaſt calculated for me, you muſt therefore pardon me if I ſay in that caſe, I am very certain I ſhould certainly ſwerve from the obedience I owe you, as I never could comply with ſuch a requeſt." Sir John looked very much confuſed, pulled out his watch, ſaid it was later than he thought, and haſtily quitted the room.

LETTER XXXI.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

How good are you, my amiable Leonora, in ſo bountifully complying with my requeſt, go on, my friend, go on with your agreeable narrative, our fears for you with regard to the recommended Peer, will not in the leaſt abate the pleaſure we experience from the recital, but we all tremble for your couſin: My aunt Danvers ſays, "you do not any of you know the art Sir John is capable of practiſing, where he wiſhes to bring about his deſign; he cannot,

not," " continued ſhe," force his ſon into ſo odious an union it is true, but the character your friend gives of him, opens a much ſafer path to tread in: he will moſt aſſuredly avail himſelf of the tenderneſs and affection, which ſeems ſo manifeſt in every action of Mr. Morgan's, and if he cannot conquer his obſtinate averſion to the lady, he will gain his point by working upon his duty and regard to himſelf. " I ſhould hope," returned my dear mother, " however anxious Sir John may be for the match, he would not think of taking any unwarrantable meaſures to accompliſh his purpoſe; certainly the rendering merit ſubſervient to his ſcheme, muſt be called ſo; a parent has no right, whatever may be their way of thinking, to inflict miſery on their children for life, by diſpoſing of them contrary to their inclinations. I am ſure my Charles," continued ſhe, " ſighing, " my Iſabinda ſhall never experience ſuch cruelty from me; no, were they even to wiſh to unite themſelves contrary to my deſire (which I do not think either of them would,) I ſhould coolly and candidly ſet before them every inconvenience which might ariſe from their choice, and if the parental love which I ſhewed, and their own good ſenſe was not effectual, I ſhould endeavour to ſubdue my repugnance and make the beſt of it." Moved even to tears I aroſe and approaching her, preſſed her hand in mine; " this tenderneſs," ſaid I, " my dear mama, is too much, I cannot bear it, never, Oh! never will your Iſabinda give her hand where you have the leaſt repugnance; you have in two or three inſtances allowed me your ſanction to refuſe it, where my heart was not concerned, permit me now to thank you for it, and to reiterate the promiſe I have given." While I was ſpeaking my aunt fixed her penetrating eyes upon me, ſhe ſeemed to wiſh to dive into my inmoſt thoughts; when I had finiſhed, ſhe exclaimed; " Happy, how happy would it be if parents and children would ever think as you do;

do; may you, my dear ſiſter, always retain your preſent ſentiments; and you, Iſabinda, in future, act up to thoſe you have poſſeſſed." Her ſtedfaſt looks have, however, ſtruck me; what could they mean, Leonora? but what need I care, guiltleſs myſelf, entirely unattached, I have no cauſe to fear the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny. I am interrupted, the dinner-bell warns me, it is time to ſtop, to-morrow I will reſume my pen.

In Continuation.

Ah, my friend, my aunt's penetrating eyes, her ſtedfaſt looks, are fatally explained, and you, my love, are too true a propheteſs; take the recital of yeſterday morning's occurrences as they befel your Iſabinda. Why? O, why did Nature form me of the ſofteſt mould, only to experience too deeply, the woes inflicted on my deareſt friends? Why am I to be the cauſe of wretchedneſs to one I value as my life; next to my brother, of all mankind, Lucerne is moſt eſteemed by me. Indeed (as I have before ſaid), I know not hardly which I moſt regard. Why then, cannot I add love to that eſteem? but it is impoſſible; nay, if I could, I too plainly ſee it would not be approved of even by my mother, much leſs by my aunt, who, as we have often obſerved, wants not ambition, with regard to her niece's future proſpects. They both admire the virtues of Lucerne, it is true, they hang upon each word he utters, with fond regard, and every action juſtly merits their favor; but there the regard, the admiration ends; and what I am going to relate, will give you a convincing proof of it.—After we had breakfaſted,

breakfaſted, yeſterday, my mother propoſed to my aunt, a walk to the greenhouſe, as I know a ramble that way commonly takes them up for ſeveral hours, I told them, I would make uſe of the opportunity to return Lucy Beverley's viſit, and would call upon Caroline to accompany me; my mother wiſhed me to take one of the footmen, but as Marſton Vale is but a ſhort mile from us, I declined it, and ſaid, "if I did not meet with Caroline, I ſhould proceed to Sir Philip Beverley's by myſelf. I called at the parſonage, and was told that Mrs. Lucerne and her daughter were gone to ſpend the day with one of their friends at D: and had ſet out in the poſtchaiſe very early that morning, as they wiſhed to make as long a viſit as they could. Having received this anſwer, I immediately turned my ſteps towards that delightful vale ſo juſtly admired by my ever dear Leonora: as I croſſed your favourite meadow at the declivity of Springwood Caſtle, I ſtopped to take a view of the enchanting ſcene before me: one of the fineſt mornings I ever remembered, in the moſt charming month of the whole year, the beautiful verdure of the variegated graſs, the remarkable freſhneſs of the trees which only May affords, ſtruck me in a particular manner, and with a kind of enthuſiaſm. I cried, "how beautiful is this proſpect, how divine are all thy works parent of good; even by myſelf I cannot help expreſſing my adoration at thy Almighty power, how great, how vaſt would be the pleaſure, was my friend here, to join her grateful thanks to mine, for all the benefits thou beſtoweſt on us poor erring mortals." I cannot tell how long I ſhould have continued my rhapſody had I not been ſtopped by a voice, which iſſued from the green bench which ſurrounds the large ſpreading oak, where you, my love, have ſo often been the companion of my chearful hours; how often have we in ſocial converſe there ſpent the early morn,

morn, there ſeated, have truly enjoyed the noon-tide breeze; and when the ſun has begun to withdraw his chearful rays, there have we mutually experienced the cooling fragrance of its evening beams. I ſtarted with ſurpriſe as theſe words reached my ears, "and is there none elſe but Leonora with whom you could enraptured praiſe the heavenly power; no happy mortal that muſt preſume to think of ſuch ſuperior bliſs, as to join their devotions, to purity which even angels might behold with wonder: and is that ſpotleſs form and mind, to give up every thought to friendſhip, none to love?" Confuſed and aſtoniſhed, for I did not recollect the voice, I gazed wildly round me, and at laſt diſcovered Lucerne upon the before-mentioned bench, with a book in his hand; as I at that moment forgot all your ſuſpicions, I went up to him, and ſeating myſelf by his ſide, "upon my word," ſaid I, laughing, "Lucerne, I ſhall not eaſily forgive you for the fright you have put me into, you ſhould have conſidered that in the deep contemplations I was engaged with, it was not very likely for me inſtantly to remember who ſpoke: he ſeemed greatly embarraſſed; "not eaſily forgive me," ſaid he, "My lovely Iſabinda, that would be cruelty indeed; there is nothing in this world that could torment me equal to your frown." Theſe words joined to the look which attended them, brought to my mind your repeated ſuggeſtions; I now repented having joined him: what could I do? to riſe directly would have had a very odd appearance, to have aſſumed a grave countenance would have ſeemed equally particular; I was greatly fluttered, but endeavouring to laugh it off; "You are very gallant indeed," returned I, "but to be ſerious, did you ever ſee a finer morning? admire with me," continued I, "the delightful view before us; how charming is that diſtant proſpect of the vale opening betwixt

twixt thoſe trees; how beautiful the caſtle and that hanging wood belonging to it on the right, and how delightfully are our eyes entertained with that charming river, that meanders through thoſe fine meadows to the left." I might have gone on I believe all day; but finding he made no anſwer, I turned to look at him in expectation of one, what was my ſurprize, my friend, to ſee the greateſt anxiety in his intelligent countenance; I was really frightened, and not in the leaſt conſidering myſelf as the cauſe of his grief, cried out, "What is the matter, Lucerne? Surely you have received no bad news from my brother, tell, ah! tell me, does any thing ail him, has any thing happened to him for his family to bewail a ſecond time." "No" ſaid he, "my fair one," greatly confuſed, "your brother is perfectly well, and ſtill continues his laudable purſuits; you need not be under any fears for him at preſent; but if I might preſume," ſaid he, (in the greateſt tremor,) "if I ſhould dare to have the confidence, to try to awaken your pity for a man who has the tendereſt regard for you, ſay charming Iſabinda, ſay, would you not ſpurn him from you, would you not treat with contempt the vows of one, (who hopeleſs as he is of a return) cannot let ſlip this favourable opportunity of telling you he adores you: alas! the uneaſineſs which you view with ſuch ſurpriſe, is occaſioned by the remarks you have yourſelf made on the enchanting ſcene around us, the ſun ſhines forth with bliſsful beams to all but me; there was a time when I could look upon this proſpect with delight, but now"—here Leonora, the poor man's ſpeech almoſt failed of utterance, "now," reſumed he, "all is a dreary void to me." I knew not what to ſay, I ſat ſpeechleſs, with downcaſt eyes, as if guilty of ſome unpardonable crime; that Lucerne, whom I have known and valued from my earlieſt infancy, the man by all ſo much

revered,

revered, ſhould ſuffer for want of a proper return of affection from me, ſtruck me too forcibly, and I could have wept: "that ſilence," reſumed he, "thoſe downcaſt eyes, too plainly tell me, that my ſuit is vain; believe me, Miſs Aſhton, I have long ſtruggled with my paſſion for you, deſpairing of a return, I have, for theſe three years paſt, done every thing in my power to check it; but the improving graces of your form, that mind, that heavenly mind, which daily ſtruck me more and more, damped all my wiſe reſolves; and while I fondly gazed on every outward charm, and with ſtill greater admiration, reflected on each mental grace, I found my reſolution weaker every hour, and the philoſopher, at laſt yielded to the man. Emboldened," continued he, "by the kind expreſſions of Mrs. Danvers, after my communicating to her that fatal affair of Captain Aſhton's, I ventured to drop a diſtant hint, in what my utmoſt wiſh was centered; ſhe heard me with the utmoſt goodneſs, it is true, but her anſwer did not convey even the ſlighteſt hope; and I ſhould have with ſilence buried in the inmoſt receſſes of my heart, each fond regard for ever, if your preſence, ſo unexpectedly, this morning, had not, in a manner, forced the ſecret from me. Loveliеſt of women, tell me, I conjure you, oh ſay, at leaſt, that the unhappy Lucerne has not forfeited your forgiveneſs, by the confeſſion he has made." I was by this time, as much agitated as him; my tears flowed in abundance: "No, Lucerne," ſaid I, (not withdrawing the hand he held in his), "far be it from me, "to look with anger upon an overture, which I ſhall always eſteem an honor; if there is any forgiveneſs neceſſary, it is I that ought to implore it; forgive oh beſt of men! the ſtupidity (I may well call it ſo) that prevents a return of love on my part, accept my friendſhip, my warmeſt wiſhes for your welfare, and every endeavour in my power,

power, to ſooth your mind to peace; pardon the coldneſs with which I meet your vows, unmerited by the faultleſs Lucerne, and unwiſhed by me; receive my grateful thanks for your tenderneſs, and believe me, when I ſay, no other man is the object of that affection, which I muſt deny to you," he ſighed deeply; "Fool," ſaid he to himſelf, "vain fool, what could I expect but this;" then raiſing his voice, and addreſſing himſelf to me, "Iſabinda," ſaid he, "this frank, this open confeſſion, enhances your worth the more; yes, moſt charming of women, I adore your ingenuous behaviour; your ſex are, too apt to lengthen the captivity of thoſe who wear your chains, even though you have not a thought of ever rewarding their ſervices; how noble, therefore, in you (by a candour, I am very ſorry to ſay it, almoſt unexampled), not to give an unmeaning hope: I muſt ſubmit to the ſentence you have paſſed on me, let me entreat you, in my turn, to receive my unbounded friendſhip, though you deny my love; my every thought, my every wiſh, is centered in your welfare; I will never trouble you again on a ſubject that muſt be irkſome to you, and ſhould ſome happier man," continued he with faultering accents, "be hereafter more ſucceſsful than the wretched Lucerne; bleſs her," ſaid he, lifting up his eyes to heaven; "may every bleſſing attend you, my adored Miſs Aſhton, that awaits that ſtrict, that ſolemn union, which is only ſcorned by fools." "If," ſaid I, "Lucerne," after thanking him for his kind wiſhes, "you will promiſe me to do the utmoſt in your power to conquer this unlucky paſſion, which you have conceived for me, you will give me the greateſt proof that is poſſible of your regard for my welfare; believe me, moſt valuable of men, I cannot be happy if I ſee you miſerable;" "hard, hard injunction," replied he, ſhaking his head, "I fear it is impoſſible, but I will endeavour to

do

do every thing that Iſabinda deſires, and if in future, a ſigh ſhould eſcape me, pity the weak reſolves which rebel againſt the will." "There is one more," ſaid I, "which I muſt add, before I can be ſatisfied; do not let this converſation deprive us of your uſual viſits; ſhould you abſent yourſelf from Bellefield, on my account, it would give me the greateſt concern; let us not, I beſeech you, be debarred of the friendly intercourſe, which has ever ſubſiſted betwixt our families, through my inſenſibility." He ſighed, and ſaid he would if poſſible, in all things obey me, kiſſed my hand with great tenderneſs, and attended me home as far as our lawn. Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

WHEN I returned, I found my mother and aunt in great conſternation at my long ſtay; it ſeems, the dinner bell had rung ſome time, a ſervant had been ſent in queſt of me, and all was confuſion; which was by no means removed on my appearance. "Iſabinda," ſaid my aunt, "you have frightened us out of our wits;" "where have you been, my love, all this while," cried my mother, in the ſame breath, "how pale you look; ſomething particular has happened, I am ſure there has, tell my dear," continued my affectionate mother, and relieve my fears." I burſt into a flood of tears: "indeed, my love," ſaid my aunt, "you alarm us very much; what is the matter; look Iſabinda, look how you diſtreſs my ſiſter, do ſpeak, I conjure you;" John came in to announce dinner, it was ordered to be removed again; my tender mother ſeated herſelf by me, and folding me in her arms, "let me prevail on you, my deareſt Iſabinda," ſaid ſhe, "to diſcloſe the meaning of theſe tears; has any accident befallen you? I wiſhed you to have taken a ſervant you, why would you not follow my advice?" "My dear mama," replied I, "make yourſelf eaſy (recovering myſelf a little) there has no accident happened to me, I give you my word." Something particular then, has arrived to ſome of the Beverly family, I ſuppoſe," ſaid my aunt; "not as I know of, madam," replied I, "for I have not been there, I aſſure you!" "Not been there," returned my mother, "why, where can you have been all this time, my love?" I then, with many tears and interruptions, related to them what had

paſſed

paſſed betwixt Lucerne and I. My mother did not ſeem greatly ſurpriſed; I ſuppoſe my aunt had mentioned the hints he had dropt, to her; they both applauded my conduct, and ſpoke of the worthy man, with great reſpect; but, as I ſaid before, there it ended; for even my mother made anſwer: "amiable as he is, my Iſabinda, it is not a match that would have met with my approbation, I am, therefore, glad your affections were not mutual. "Approbation," replied my aunt, no, I think not indeed; Iſabinda's education, and many other advantages, ſhe poſſeſſes, entitle her to look a great deal higher than Lucerne, eſtimable as he is, and for my part, I could not have endured the thoughts of ſuch an union." You therefore ſee, my Leonora, had I returned our worthy friend's regard, it would have been of very little ſignification, as I ſhould by no means, like to unite myſelf contrary to my aunt's wiſhes; without my mother's approbation, I never will: that beſt of women; however, all ſoftneſs, all ſenſibility, as you, my friend, well know, deplored, even with tears, Lucerne's unhappy attachment. After we had dined, (which we at laſt did), "I will go to him," ſaid ſhe, "we are very luckily without any engagement this afternoon, and the abſence of his mother and ſiſter, gives me a favourable opportunity of converſing with him; every thing in my power ſhall be ſaid and done, to reſtore his wonted ſerenity; ambitious views I never had, through life, I therefore, am the propereſt perſon to talk with him on the ſubject; I will, if poſſible, convince him, that, though in every other reſpect, (had it depended on me) I ſhould have received with joy, his offered alliance, yet the diſparity of years, betwixt my daughter and him, ought, in my mind, ever to forbid a thought of marriage betwixt them. "Aye," interrupted my aunt, "go to him, ſiſter, you are the propereſt perſon indeed; and when

you

you have, as I hope you will be able to calm his mind in ſome meaſure; ſay to him from me, every thing that eſteem can dictate, and regard can ſhew for ſo deſerving a man;" and let not" ſaid I, "my dear mama, your Iſabinda be forgotten; tell him how much, how greatly I am obliged to him; convince him, if you can, that my future peace depends upon his chearfulneſs, and, (if you think proper) tell him likewiſe, how much I lament that it is not in my power to make a ſuitable return for his tenderneſs." My mother made no anſwer, but ſtraining me in her arms, embraced me with the utmoſt love: I followed her as far as the door into the garden, when ſhe told me, ſhe wiſhed me there to leave her, as what ſhe had to ſay to our unhappy friend, required conſideration. My aunt and I paſſed the whole afternoon by ourſelves; we were too much affected to admit of any converſation; I believe I went twenty times to the garden door before my worthy mother's return; at laſt ſhe came, and entered the parlour, with that benign ſmile on her countenance, which ever ſpeaks a heart at peace within. "I have in ſome meaſure, ſaid ſhe, "calmed the worthy Lucerne, I have left him much more compoſed than I found him; the interview at firſt was terrible indeed, but the very great ſenſe he is maſter of, by degrees conquered the agitation he was in, and I at laſt brought him to liſten to me with tolerable ſerenity: I wiſhed him and his family to have dined here to-morrow; but that he poſitively declined; ſaid he ſhould deſire his curate to ſupply his place in the pulpit next Sunday; and promiſed to comply with my invitation this day ſe'nnight. Adieu, my love, I can write no more.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

SIR EDWARD BEEMONT TO CAPTAIN ASHTON.

No, Aſhton, no; the joys of life without a virtuous woman, are not worth the ſeeking; I am as you well know held up as a pattern for all the young fellows of the preſent age, but conſcience that never failing monitor tells me on retroſpection, that I have for all that greatly err'd: I have drank deep of pleaſure's golden cup, inebriated with the ſtreams which flow from that inexhauſtible fount; I vainly thought I had attained a paradiſe below, that is according to the mahometan ſyſtem Charles, as my purſuits have alone centered in the poſſeſſion of thoſe hours, held forth to us in the prophet's fancied Heaven. I have always deteſted gaming, and never was a votary to Bacchus; the jolly God with all his noiſy crew, held forth no charms for me, and I have to the utmoſt of my power, throughout life, ſhunned the frolick rout. Woman, lovely woman, then, alone, has been my bane. The education of the girls of faſhion at my firſt entrance into life, precluded every thought I might have imbibed with regard to matriage; accompliſhed only for outward ſhew, not inward content, I ſickened at the thought of uniting myſelf to a being, (though handſome as an angel,) who from its earlieſt infancy, had nothing inſtilled, but the labours of the toilet, fancied works for the adornment of its perſon, and muſick, not by way of harmonizing the mind, but to follow the lead of the preſent ton; the modern mode held forth to me a much eaſier way of gratifying my darling paſſion, a certain caſt of women then appeared to me the only objects worth purſuit; I did not 'tis true vary in my amours to ſo great a degree, as moſt of the young men with whom I was intimate,

but

but guided by that falſe notion which too much prevails, I placed my happineſs in thinking myſelf at liberty to change whenever I pleaſed. My uncle Edmund was not unacquainted with my irregularities: how often has he remonſtrated to me, how often has he in the moſt glaring colours painted, the fatal conſequences of an intercourſe with thoſe deſtructive females: his reproofs by degrees ſtaggered my ill-founded notions, and I began to think there might be, a phœnix to be met with, endow'd with mental as well as perſonal graces, ſufficient to qualify her for every requiſite neceſſary to conſtitute a good wife. I was ſix and twenty, and in this temper of mind, when the ſummer before laſt I went with a friend who was likewiſe a gueſt at my uncle's, to Bradford races; the diſtance being but twenty miles, our little journey was ſoon accompliſhed, and we arrived the night before the ſecond day's ſport; we made our appearance on the race ground, and in the evening dreſt for the ball: on my entrance into the room I determined to ſurvey every female that was in the leaſt attractive with the moſt minute ſcrutiny; the affectation of ſome, the glaring folly of others, and the demure inſipidity of even the moſt rational, diſguſted me; I could not ſay of any that art aſſiſted as an handmaid to nature, for ſhe ſeemed to rule with deſpotic power in all. I was amuſing my friend Varthon with my ſatirical remarks on every fair one; when I perceived an exceeding genteel figure dancing down the ſet by which we ſtood; I cannot tell how it was, but I was particularly ſtruck the inſtant I beheld her; you are not to ſuppoſe Charles by what I have ſaid, that I am going to deſcribe Venus to you, the lady in queſtion, ſetting aſide a remarkable fine pair of dark eyes, is not in the leaſt handſome: ſhe is tall, elegantly formed, and the woman of faſhion appears in every grace and geſture: if her features are not regularly beautiful, there is however nothing irregular; and her bewitching countenance

diſplays

diſplays a heart and underſtanding, far ſuperior to the attractions of the moſt beautiful female I ever ſaw. I was convinced by the adornment of her perſon, that the gifts of fortune were not her's to boaſt of; elegantly genteel, without the leaſt profuſion, ſhe appeared more in the nature of a ſimple Flora, than attired with the ſplendour of a ſultana queen. Varthon immediately perceived the conqueſt ſhe had made; and aſked me with a ſmile, why I did not continue my vein of raillery, for I had let one lady entirely eſcape: "Do you know who ſhe is?" ſaid I, abruptly, "not I, indeed," returned he, "I am only waiting, Sir Edward, for further entertainment from you." I made him no anſwer, but quitting him directly, followed my incognita down the dance; after it was over, ſhe joined a group of females, and ſat down to reſt herſelf; I could not hear her converſation, but the lively air with which ſhe acquitted herſelf, and the ſenſible look which ſeemed to attend her every word, convinced me ſhe was the very woman I was in purſuit of; what the devil ſhall I do, thought I to myſelf, to diſcover who this angelic creature is; juſt at that inſtant, Lord Ogle approached me; as I knew him to be a very great admirer of the fair ſex, after the firſt compliments betwixt us were exchanged, I aſked him, "if he knew who that very genteel lady was, that ſat directly oppoſite to us," "and does the gallant Sir Edward Beemont," replied he, "ſo near to the cloſe of the ball, want to aſk that queſtion? ſurely you cannot be ignorant, it is the divine Miſs Wilmot, that you make enquiries after; I thought her fame had been ſo eſtabliſhed in theſe parts, that it was impoſſible for any of you faſhionable fellows not to have heard of her directly." I was proceeding to further enquiries concerning her, when his lordſhip was called away, and to my very great ſurprize, on turning about, found the lady had left her place: I ſearched for her through every room but in vain, and concluded,

concluded, that ſhe went home while I was trying to get information of her: I however learned by ſeveral acquaintance, every circumſtance relative to her; and as nothing occurred to make me change my mind, ſhould have ſtrove for a ſpeedy introduction; but Varthon and I were obliged to leave the place the next day; we did not return to my uncle's, and ſoon after I arrived in town, Eſtifania's advances to me were ſuch as could not be reſiſted: during my illicit correſpondence with her, I however often thought of the charming Miſs Wilmot; convinced by this time that I had miſtaken the road to happineſs, I laſt ſummer again attended the races; but the object that attracted me was no where to be found, and I learned before I quitted the place, that Mr. Wilmot was confined by a dangerous fever, which prevented the family's appearance there; I returned again to town; you have yourſelf too fatally experienced the allurements of Eſtifania, therefore it is unneceſſary to ſay that my return enſured me her's again; you know the reſt, but the duplicity ſhe ſhewed, heightened ſtill more the charms of the virtuous, the modeſt fair one, who had enthralled me: and I determined when I made my preſent viſit to my uncle in Bedfordſhire, to unfold my attachment to him, and aſk his aſſiſtance in it. He very ſoon gave me an opportunity; for this morning after breakfaſt he deſired my attendance in his library, when ſeating himſelf by me, the good natured man preſſed my hand in his, "Sir Edward," ſaid he, "I am afraid you will very ſoon call me your tormentor, but I muſt reſume the old ſubject again; I have, I am ſorry to ſay it, heard of a duel you have fought for a worthleſs woman, and though the accounts I have received, tend very much to your honour, yet I am ſure your own good ſenſe will dictate to you, that the cauſe which involved you in it, was a curſed bad one. Why nephew, why will you tarniſh every qualification which is poſſible for man to have, by purſuits

ſo very much beneath even thoſe, who are only of the common run of mortals? Can you poſſibly think the embraces of a woman, whoſe endearments are only the effects of venal hire; can ever be ſincere? or can any momentary enjoyment yield the leaſt pleaſure, where remorſe of conſcience muſt the next inſtant take place of every fond delight? Your own fortune is large, and when I die, will receive a very conſiderable addition from mine, you are now at a time of life when you ought to think of giving and receiving happineſs, from a virtuous woman; tell me," continued the worthy man, with great earneſtneſs, have you never ſeen any young lady, with whom you could wiſh to paſs your life?" I anſwered that I had; pleaſure ſparkled in my uncle's eyes, "but ſir," continued I, "though I have never enquired into her circumſtances, I have reaſon to think her fortune is but ſmall; that as you well know would be no objection to me, I ſet no value on money, and have enough for both; but perhaps you would not look with an eye of approbation upon an union, which is very likely, not adequate to the expectations you have formed for me." "And why not?" interrupted my uncle, "there are numbers of qualifications neceſſary to make the married ſtate happy, which are infinitely ſuperior to a little dirty pelf; pray let us know who is the object of your affections." I told him, Miſs Wilmot; and that I had ſeen her at Bradford races; he replied, that he was well acquainted with her father, that he would introduce me to him the next day, and added, that her fortune would be at leaſt, thirty thouſand pounds. Farewell.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

WELL, Charles, I have been introduced to Mr. Wilmot, but have not yet had the firſt interview with the lady, as Mrs. Wilmot and her lovely daughter were gone to ſpend the day with a friend a few miles diſtant, and Mr. Wilmot was preparing to follow them on horſeback, when my uncle and I arrived. We had a long converſation yeſterday evening on the ſubject of our this day's viſit: my uncle's opinion was, that as I had never been in company with the lady, not even the moſt diſtant hint ſhould be thrown out to the father, as to the purpoſe on which I came; but I, with all the impatience of a true enamorato, was of a different mind: I begged it might be mentioned to Mr. Wilmot, and told my uncle, "I would give him an opportunity, by inventing ſome excuſe, to leave them together;" he ſmiled at my impetuoſity, but ſaid, he would be guided by my determination: and yet, Aſhton, though I am ſo ſanguine in the affair, my laſt night's repoſe was very much interrupted; marriage, my friend, to a man of my ſerious way of thinking, is a very arduous affair; different, in my notions, to moſt of the young men of the preſent age; I ſhould think myſelf culpable to the utmoſt degree, if I allowed afterwards even of a roving thought; when once united to a woman for life, I am fixed to her for ever; do I not ſwear to be conſtant at the altar, and are not thoſe vows to be kept inviolate? Miſtake me not, Aſhton, I do not fear my want of reſolution; it is the diſſipation of the times I fear; it is the too great indulgence in which females are

initiated, that I have cauſe to dread; was I to meet with what the world calls a faſhionable wife, what a wretch would your friend Beemont be: but let it turn out as it may, I am reſolved, if the lady is equally agreeable to me on a ſecond and nearer interview, to proſecute my ſcheme, and win her, (if I can make myſelf acceptable;) another notion of mine, very different from the preſent race of men, who think every woman they are inclined to purſue, will come an eaſy conqueſt; for which the fair ones may thank themſelves, as they, (I am ſorry to ſay it,) by much the greater part of them, are ready to fly into our arms even unaſked. As my uncle had company to dinner, which were ſome of them arrived before our return, we had no time for converſation till after ſupper, when he told me, that Mr. Wilmot ſeemed delighted with the thoughts of diſpoſing of his daughter ſo happily, as well as advantageouſly; and appointed us to dine with him to-morrow, in order to proceed to an introduction. "You want no attractions, Nephew," ſaid he, "even in your greateſt diſhabille, to ſecure you the approbation of any young lady; but as I ſuppoſe you would wiſh not to appear negligent on the preſent occaſion, I think we will change our mode of travelling, as I imagine you will rather chooſe going in my poſt-chaiſe, than on horſeback." I anſwered in the affirmative. "Upon my ſoul, boy," ſaid he, "this event has given me new life; I am grown young again; why Sir Edward, you are quite a ſtranger to the perfections of the woman you have choſe, but I am not, I have been well acquainted with the family for ſome time paſt, and know her to be in every reſpect an eſtimable creature; I have no doubt of your happineſs, and therefore, think I cannot enough teſtify the joy which it occaſions." I returned him my grateful thanks, and we ſoon after ſeparated

for

for the night. Pleaſant dreams attend you, Charles; after my return to-morrow, I will give you an account of our proceedings.

Sir EDWARD BEEMONT in continuation.

O, Aſhton, I have ſeen the lady; but I will not anticipate; you ſhall take the occurrences of this day's viſit exactly as they happened. My uncle and I arrived at Brooklands a little before dinner-time; Mr. Wilmot had told him, that he expected more company, and as this firſt viſit could only be productive of obſervation, bows, and ſmiles, we thought an earlier arrival would have appeared too particular. There were ſeveral of the party aſſembled before us; I was introduced in a very reſpectable manner by Mr. Wilmot to his lady; after we were ſeated, I looked round the room in ſearch of the fair one I came in purſuit of, but in vain: there were many ladies in company, but not one of them that reſembled her at all; I ſat in anxious ſuſpence for ſome time, which was not in the leaſt relieved by the frequent ſmiles of my uncle at my embarraſſment; at laſt, the drawing-room door opened, and one of the ladies, before I could diſtinguiſh, where I was ſeated, the perſon that entered, exclaimed, "O, here is my dear Miſs Wilmot." I immediately ſtarted off my chair, and advanced to her father to be preſented to her, which he did in a very polite manner. But, O Charles, gueſs my ſurpriſe, my aſtoniſhment, my chagrin! when upon looking in her face, I diſcovered a moſt beautiful Madona, for certain, greatly ſuperior in beauty to my now unknown fair, but not to my mind

half ſo bewitching; and as different as it was poſſible for dark and light to be: her fine flaxen hair fell in profuſion down her ſhoulders, her azure eyes were fixed with modeſt ſweetneſs on me, and the vermillion glow, which I ſuppoſe this firſt introduction occaſioned, heightened her naturally very fair complexion to ſuch a degree, that I could compare her to nothing but the ſplendor of the morning ſun, ariſing from the eaſt; her perſon is not by any means ſo elegant as my incognita's, though no fault to be found in it; and ſhe wants very near half a head of her fine height. Such was the attractive object that was preſented to me, but ſhe was not the woman I was in ſearch of. I gazed in ſpeechleſs aſtoniſhment, which I ſuppoſe was attributed to my admiration of her, and after acquitting myſelf very ill, I am ſure, which was returned with down-caſt looks by her, I ſeated myſelf in a diſtant chair, though there was one cloſe by that ſhe ſituated herſelf in, entirely unoccupied. My uncle watched my every look; I found he had diſcovered enough to puzzle him, but no mortal could have penetration to ſee into the real cauſe of my confuſion. I was ſeated next her at dinner, and in vain endeavoured to appear chearful, to ſhake off the chagrin my diſappointment had occaſioned, and to behave at leaſt with the common politeneſs, due to every female we men are in company with. It was all to no purpoſe, vexation, I am very certain, was predominate in every look and action; and the cold replies of Miſs Wilmot to every effort I made for converſation, convinced me, ſhe herſelf thought I did not acquit myſelf as I ought. Glad was I when the ladies retired, tho' even then I met with ſubject enough for mortification, as ſeveral of the gentlemen expatiated on her beauty, and Frank Liddel in particular addreſſed himſelf to me, ſaying, " as we all know Sir Edward Beemont is a great judge of female charms, we will apply

to

to him, did you ever ſee any thing ſo handſome as Miſs Wilmot?" I made ſome confuſed reply, and juſt then her father returned, who had been called away by ſome perſon that had ſome buſineſs with him, and to my great joy put an end to the converſation. The whole day paſſed in this manner, ſtudied attention on my part, which ever ended in no attention at all, and coldneſs on her's; nay, I was doomed to be kept ſtill longer on the rack, as I had no opportunity of communicating to my uncle, the cauſe of my diſtreſs, till after our return, Sir Sampſon Wickham, a near neighbour of his complaining of indiſpoſition towards evening, which induced me to offer him my place in the carriage, ſaying, "that I would drive myſelf home in his phaeton;" and to add ſtill more to my confuſion, upon my taking leave of Mrs. Wilmot, ſhe ſaid to me, "we ſee you again I hope to-morrow, Sir Edward at dinner time." "Aye, to be ſure," ſaid my uncle, "I am engaged to an annual meeting, but nothing will prevent his coming I warrant him." I made no kind of anſwer, and ſhuffled out of the room in as aukward a manner as any country ploughboy. But is it not aſtoniſhing, Charles, that the fathers, nay even the mothers of the preſent age, proceed with ſuch eagerneſs in the diſpoſal of their daughters; they certainly forget that ſtriking ſtatue of the Venus de Medicis, which modeſtly retiring charms. Upon my ſoul it is enough to ſurfeit a man, inſtead of faſcinating, when he comes in ſearch of a wife, to have her parents puſh her down his throat, when they ſhould only gently lead her to his arms. You will ſay I am ſevere, but recollect alſo that I am diſappointed, my ſchemes are fruſtrated; and I know not where to ſearch after the only object, which can ever bind me irrevocably to her. It requires all my philoſophy, Charles, to combat this ſtroke. Adieu, I will try to compoſe myſelf to-night, and will write again to-morrow.

LETTER XXXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I GOT home laſt night ſome time before my uncle. I was in a curſed ill humour, Aſhton, and made Sir Sampſon's horſes pay for it; I believe his ſervants wondered what the devil was the matter with me, for I kept them up to a pretty hard gallop the whole way. My uncle ſoon after his arrival joined me on the lawn at the back of his houſe, he came up to me, and after ſurveying me for ſome time with a ſmile, "Hey day, nephew," ſaid he, "what is the matter with you? why I expected when I was told you was in the garden, to have found you prancing about with the elated ſtep of an approaching happy bridegroom, inſtead of that, I meet with nothing but ſigns of the greateſt dejection. Faith, Sir Edward," continued he, again ſmiling, "you make a moſt deplorable appearance; arms folded, hat drawn over your face, the ſlow ſtep of eighty, inſtead of the ſprightly tread of eight and twenty, nay even your very coat is buttoned from top to bottom;" and it was very true, Charles, for as I was walking up and down, curſing my fate, and conſidering in what manner I ſhould extricate myſelf from the ſcrape I had by my own folly brought on me, I by degrees, without knowing it, buttoned every button, till at laſt I am very certain I muſt bear the greateſt reſemblance that could be, to a travelling portmanteau, very full of linen, and tightly ſtrapt. "My dear Sir," cried I, "for heaven's ſake ſtop this vein of raillery, I am not at preſent in a mood to be played on." "No faith, I think not," ſaid my uncle, "why man

man you are as a fallen miniſter or diſappointed coquet." "Yes, Sir," returned I, "I am diſappointed, and greatly diſappointed too;" "and pray Sir Edward," replied he, "what may be the cauſe of this prodigious mortification? I am ſure my friend Wilmot and his wife made every advance in their power to you; and as to the girl, if ſhe was a little ſhy," continued he, laughing, "you ought to conſider it was your firſt meeting; and in my mind, it ſhould enhance the value you have already for her, (with a ſly leer), for modeſty in a young maiden, let me tell you, has great charms." I began to ſuſpect, by my uncle's manner, that he gueſſed the cauſe of my chagrin, which encouraged me to make an open confeſſion to him. When I had finiſhed, he burſt into a violent fit of laughter, and ſtriking his cane on the graſs, exclaimed, "If I did not ſuſpect this the whole day never truſt me!" then aſſuming a grave air, "But why did you make me proceed ſo far yeſterday with your overtures to her father? you know, nephew, I was not inclined to enter into a negociation ſo ſoon. I believe now," ſaid he, looking up to the ſky as if full of thought, (I was thoroughly attentive), "I believe now," repeated he again, "Sir Edward, there is nothing to be done but to marry her directly." "Oh Sir," replied I, "let me entreat you not to teize me at this rate; marry her? no—handſome as ſhe is, and amiable as by her manner ſhe appears to be, I would marry the Devil as ſoon! Have I not told you, uncle, that I am irrevocably fixed in my choice:" here he laughed again. "Really Sir, this is very provoking," continued I, "upon my ſoul I cannot bear it! I am however glad, very glad indeed, that ſo ſanguine as you was in the affair this morn, you can turn your own diſappointment into ridicule; for I ſwear by all that is ſacred, I never will unite myſelf to any one but the lady I mentioned

to you." "Why as to that, nephew," returned he, "I was no otherways ſanguine, but as wiſhing to ſee you fixed, my boy, and knowing her to be a young woman thoroughly calculated to make any man happy: it would have been very wrong in me to have attempted to have thwarted your inclinations, you know," (winking at me while he ſpoke.) "But come, we muſt try to make the beſt of it; let me ſee—" Here I drew quite cloſe to him; when turning to me and looking very earneſtly in my face, "Where do you ſay, Sir Edward, we are to find the lady that you have fixed your affections on?" "Damnation!" retorted I, "this is too much, I do wiſh, Sir, that I could perſuade you your mirth is very ill-timed; but however," ſaid I, "I muſt, I find, ſtand the brunt of the ſhafts you are pleaſed to level at me: they jeſt at ſcars that never felt a wound." "Oh! in heroics too!" returned he, "I thought I was walking in my own garden, and I find I am at the theatre; but I'll tell you what, Sir Edward, I am thoroughly convinced of one thing, which your preſent heat makes you not ſenſible of: it is, that the graſs gets very wet, and if I ſtay here much longer I ſhall have the gout to-morrow; therefore, my gentle Romeo, I muſt deſire we may diſcuſs this point in the parlour where we are to ſup." Saying this he turned about, and followed him: before he reached the houſe he ſtopped, and ſurveyed me again from head to foot; when laughing very heartily, "Upon my ſoul, nephew," ſaid he, "you muſt excuſe me, but I cannot help it: why, what a figure you cut! do, for goodneſs ſake, unfold thoſe arms, unbutton that coat, put your hat in the proper poſition, and let us again ſee that prodigious quantity of muſlin that ſtuck out ſo ſmart from underneath your chin this morn." I made no anſwer, but ſhrugging up my ſhoulders, entered the hall with him. Supper was ſoon after

after ſerved; my uncle eat but little, and for my part, I did not ſwallow a ſingle mouthful. After the ſervants were withdrawn, he ſat for ſome time with one elbow on the table, his hand acroſs his eyes, which is ever his cuſtom when muſing: at laſt, rouſing from his reverie, he aſked me with a tolerable grave countenance, what I intended to do; to which I anſwered, that I had thought of every method to extricate myſelf, but could not hit on any expedient which was compatible with even tolerable politeneſs; but, continued I, with great earneſtneſs, "it is my fixed determination, as I before told you, Sir, not to marry the lady." "Well, well," ſaid he, with a ſtifled laugh, "there is no occaſion however to be ſo very ſerious about it; and now I have had my joke, Sir Edward, I will endeavour to throw a little balm into the wounds which I have (I muſt own) probed to the utmoſt." I looked at him, I believe, as if doubtful of what was to come; for putting on a very grave face, "You have no occaſion, nephew, to miſtruſt the ſincerity of what I have to ſay to you, I promiſe you. We old fellows," continued he, ("that is the rational ones among us I mean), do not vault into the air as you young men are apt to do, when you have not a girl in your heads: we tread on firm ground; it ſuits our decrepid feet beſt. I conſidered with myſelf, that notwithſtanding you was ſuch a love-ſick ſwain, as you had never you know been in company with the lady," (ſmiling while he ſpoke), "there might, perchance, be ſomething in her not quite ſo attractive upon a nearer view, as what your ſanguine notions had at a diſtance formed to you; I therefore took a quite different method from that which you deſired, and when left alone with Wilmot, told him, that I wiſhed to introduce my nephew to him, as being very deſirous of his entering into the married ſtate: and knowing he had ſuch

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an amiable and lovely daughter, ſhould think myſelf very happy if her charms had the power to conquer his averſion to wedlock, and render my felicity complete by an alliance betwixt the two families. This overture, ſuch as it was, met as I told you, with immediate approbation, and an invitation to dinner. Hearky'e, my friend," returned I, " Fair and ſoftly goes far: we will certainly pay our reſpects to you to-morrow; but charming as your daughter is, we may perhaps find ſome difficulty in getting my young man, I can tell you, but there is no occaſion to repeat any thing more that paſſed; for you find, Sir Edward, by what I have told you, you are not quite ſo faſt tied down as you thought for." I was all rapture; thanked my uncle a thouſand times, and ended with ſaying, " there was now no occaſion for me to reſume the viſit at ſo early a period as to-morrow." " Not ſo faſt, man, not ſo faſt," replied he, " we muſt proceed with a little caution; however, I would by all means have you go to-morrow, and at an early hour too; you may aſſure yourſelf you will find Miſs entirely alone. Something perhaps may ariſe, to draw on with propriety, an eclairciſſement betwixt you: ſhe is a girl of great merit, and I ſhould be ſorry to have her mortified; ſtay and dine according to Mrs. Wilmot's invitation, and leave the reſt to me. I ſhall hear what you ſay on your return; I have promiſed to do as he deſires, but muſt confeſs, Charles, it has not been without repugnance. I wiſh to my ſoul the day was over. I will write on my return, which ſhall be as ſoon in the evening as I with propriety can. Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

ASHTON, I am returned; ſhe is a moſt charming creature that is certain; but I ſhall proceed in my uſual method, and give you this day's occurrences as they happened. When I was equipt this morning, and ready to mount my horſe, I went into the library, to take my leave of my uncle; he rallied me heartily (and with reaſon) on the difference of my appearance, to what I was yeſterday; for indeed Charles, there had been no pains taken to ſet myſelf off, as the women ſay: as ſoon as I quitted him, I ſet out for Brooklands: rode very deliberately, and was ſtruck with many of the delightful views, which this part of the world ſo much abounds in; they were quite new to me, as they had entirely eſcaped my obſervation the day before. Mr. Wilmot's houſe is ſituated in a very extenſive park; the morning was delightful, and the quantity of deer, with which it is well ſtocked, the grandeur of the number of fine ſpreading oaks, which diverſify the ſcene, added to many beautiful little rivers, which adorn the ſpot, charmed me exceedingly; the diſtant view of a remarkably good houſe, which the eye catches, from many parts of the park, is very noble; and on your nearer approach the ſhrubbery detached from it, by a ha-ha, which conveys you immediately to the manſion, has a particular pleaſing effect: I rode up with tolerable compoſure, the gravel walk which ſurrounds the variegated green; and, upon enquiry found, that my uncle's conjectures were true, for I was told that Miſs Wilmot, only, was at home: they carried me up ſtairs, into an exceeding pretty dreſſing-room, fitted up and furniſhed in a very elegant

taſte; windows both ways, thoſe in front, commanding a moſt enchanting view of the ſhrubbery and park, the ſide one opening to a very delightful garden; in the bow window, next the garden, ſat Miſs Wilmot, with a table before her, at work; ſhe roſe at my entrance, and with great politeneſs, begged me to be ſeated; the roſes, Aſhton, which had yeſterday, at her firſt appearance, ſo profuſely adorned her lovely face, were entirely fled; the lily now, alone preſided there, which ſeemed to hang its head as overcharged with ſhowers. She raiſed her charming eyes to mine, but inſtantly caſt them down again with an averted glance: I was all confuſion, and having ſtammered out ſome enquiries after her parents, which ſhe anſwered with civility; but a reſerve attending it, very natural on ſuch a meeting; could not for the ſoul of me think on any one topic to begin a converſation with. I ſat for ſome few minutes very much like a fool, picking out the fingers of my gloves, looking round the room, and then at the proſpect. Unable to ſupport the ſcene any longer, I got up, and walking to a diſtant window, ſtood loſt in thought, in what manner I ſhould begin, (not the overtures I was going to make her) but the free confeſſion (attended with as much politeneſs as I could poſſibly mix) of the unfortunate miſtake I had made. I had muſed in this manner but a very little while, when I heard her hem, in a kind of a confuſed manner, two or three times; I turned to look at her, and was greatly ſurpriſed to ſee her fine eyes wet with tears: I immediately returned to the table where ſhe ſat, and taking one of her hands, begged to know, if I was ſo unhappy to be the cauſe of her diſtreſs. She ſtrove to ſpeak, but, for ſome time, vainly ſtrove; at laſt, with a tremulous voice, ſhe made me this anſwer." If Sir Edward Beemont is the cauſe of my diſtreſs, I am ſure he is innocently ſo; his appearance, joined to the character I have heard of him, convinces me, that he would not, knowingly,

knowingly, contribute to the unhappineſs of any one, but;" here ſhe ſtopped, a flood of tears came to her relief; I begged her, with great earneſtneſs, to proceed. "Oh Sir Edward," ſaid ſhe, in the ſweeteſt mournful accents, "you are entirely ignorant of the trouble your appearance has occaſioned here," putting her hand to her heart; then looking earneſtly at me for ſome time, ſhe reſumed, "but I muſt be quick, ſhould I loſe this favourable opportunity, I know not what may happen; encouraged by the candor which is ſo viſible in your countenance, joined to ſome remarks, which I yeſterday made on your behaviour to me, may I," ſaid ſhe again, faltering in her ſpeech, "ought I, dare I to confeſs, to one almoſt a ſtranger to me, that the heart, my father tells me, you are come in queſt of, has been for ſome time paſt, unchangeably given to another;" the effort ſhe had made to deliver this ſpeech, was too much for her, ſhe was very near fainting; I roſe, and taking ſome lavender water off the toilet, held it to her noſe; ſhe appeared refreſhed by it, and when ſhe came a little to herſelf, I gave her the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that I would never moleſt her more with viſits, that I found could be by no means agreeable, (I could eaſily do that, you know, Charles), and, at the ſame time, begged to know, if I could be of the leaſt aſſiſtance to her, promiſing the ſtricteſt ſecreſy, if ſhe would intruſt me. "Alas Sir Edward," replied ſhe, "it is not in your power to lend the aſſiſtance you are ſo kind to offer. My father is an entire ſtranger to my attachment, and muſt remain ſo; was he to be acquainted with it, there are obſtacles, which I am certain would in his mind, preclude all thoughts of an alliance, nay, even my dear mother is entirely ignorant of it, ſhe thinks her daughter's heart is free; ſhe knows not the corroding cares that ſit ſo heavy there;" then turning to me with anxious looks, "I hope" continued ſhe, "the confeſſion I have made, will not be the cauſe of any great diſappointment

ment to you, your behaviour yeſterday gave me reaſon to think it would not; far be it from me to wiſh the unhappineſs of any one: but" ſaid ſhe, "I ſee our carriage at a diſtance, there are ſome fatal reaſons, Sir Edward, why the refuſal muſt come from you; tell me," ſaid the charmer, "ah, tell me, as you ſeem to wiſh to act ſo friendly, how you will proceed in the affair." I thought it beſt for our mutual ſatisfaction, to let her know the miſtake I had made, what my uncle had ſaid to her father, and that he had taken it upon himſelf on my return, to put it off with Mr. Wilmot; ſhe ſeemed exceedingly delighted; "Sir Edward," ſaid the now ſmiling angel, "how happy has this explanation made me; but let me not be wanting in a proper return of friendſhip, deſcribe the lady to me, you are ſo much ſtruck with; we are acquainted with almoſt every body in theſe parts, I may perhaps be able to introduce you to her," concluded ſhe, with a very lively air, I kiſſed her hand in raptures; but ſurely, Aſhton, I am fated to be for ever diſappointed: for after I had given an exact deſcription of her perſon, manner, and dreſs, ſhe told me, ſhe perfectly well recollected the lady; that ſhe was particularly ſtruck with the elegance of her form, and had enquired of many, who ſhe was, but could get no anſwer from them, but that ſhe and the whole party with her, were entire ſtrangers there; ſhe likewiſe ſaid, that ſhe remembered, juſt at the cloſe of the ball, that ſhe came and ſat down by her, which, I ſuppoſe, was the occaſion of that curſed miſtake of Lord Ogle's. Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot, ſoon after arrived, and found us both, as you may imagine, in high ſpirits. I paſſed a very agreeable day, very different from what I imagined, and the fair one and I parted with mutual proteſtations of the greateſt friendſhip, without one thought on either ſide, of love: it was late when I returned, my uncle came to the door when he ſaw me at the gate, and watched my countenance, as I walked

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up the gravel walk to the houſe; convinced by the alacrity with which I approached him, that all was right; the good old man gave me a hearty ſhake by the hand; a very different ſcene enſued from what had paſſed the night before; he is ſo charmed with Miſs Wilmot's openneſs of behaviour, that he could never enough extol her; and we agreed, that in two or three days, he ſhould go without me to her father, and entirely put it off, in whatever manner he thought proper; which can be eaſily done, as no more paſſed between us. Bradford races are to commence next week, I am determined to have another trial after my incognita; and as we are upon the platonic ſyſtem, intend to engage Miſs Wilmot for a partner, unleſs her lover is an attendant there; for by that time, my uncle will have acquainted her father, that my admiration for his daughter, tho' great, cannot conquer my diſlike to matrimony. Adieu, Charles.

LETTER XXXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

You will wonder, Charles, I have not proceeded in my narrative, but if you recollect, two or three days were to elapſe, before my uncle was to make the above mentioned viſit to Mr. Wilmot, and as it by that time drew near to Bradford races, I thought it more expedient to give you the concluſion of my ſtory all together. My uncle at the time agreed on, went to Brooklands, and on his return informed me, that Mr. Wilmot ſeemed greatly chagrined at his diſappointment, but ſaid, he thought there was no occaſion

occaſion for the intimacy to be broke off, as perhaps, upon a further acquaintance, the young folks might get mutually attached; "if he chooſes," ſaid my uncle, after he had told me, "to make ſuch a fool of himſelf, I cannot help it, I have candidly acquainted him, that it will not do, and did not think it neceſſary to put a negative on his propoſal, ſo far from it, I invited them to dine with me the day after to-morrow, which invitation was very readily accepted; and upon my taking leave of Wilmot, deſired him to acquaint his wife, with the bad ſucceſs of my negociation: he promiſed me he would, but it was with a ſmile that plainly indicated, he hoped for better ſucceſs in future." When the day arrived, Aſhton, I obſerved a particular coolneſs in Mrs. Wilmot's behaviour, on her firſt appearance, but it gradually wore off, her charming daughter was every thing that was agreeable; the reſtraint, the melancholy which had before hung on her, was entirely diſperſed, and her ſweet face bloomed with its greateſt charms. I took an opportunity, as we were walking in my uncle's pleaſure-grounds, before their departure, to mention the approaching races; whiſpering her with a ſmile, that I ſhould be very happy to be honoured with her hand, both evenings at the ball, but that I did ſuppoſe the favourite gentleman, had been before me in his application; a tranſient gloom over-clouded her fair face; "ah no," ſaid ſhe, "Sir Edward, we are divided many many, miles aſunder, never perhaps, to meet again;" ſhe ſighed; then recovering herſelf, "I cannot however," continued ſhe, "though not in a very fit diſpoſition for dancing, refuſe the kind offer of one who has dealt in ſuch an ingenuous and friendly manner by me, therefore I ſhall conſider myſelf as engaged with a partner, at the enſuing meeting." The obliging ſmile ſhe repeated theſe laſt words with, I dare ſay, drew the envy of ſeveral young men of the party on me, though none of the company were near enough to hear the purport

purport of them; to be ſhort, there was a very ſplendid meeting: I ſuppoſe I ſtand enrolled in the book of fame, for dancing both nights, with the Bedfordſhire deity; I will not pay her ſo bad a compliment as to ſay I paſſed my time diſagreeably, but I was plaguily diſappointed again; for no incognita appeared: in vain I ſearched for her in every carriage which appeared on the heath at noon, and ſurveyed with attention, the countenance of every genteel nymph in the ball-room at night: ſhe was no where to be found, and I now give over all thoughts of ever meeting her in theſe parts, as moſt likely her place of reſidence is far removed from hence. Your friend Lord Hethſton, Charles, and Colonel Turfdown, were finely plumed; I am for my part, never ſorry when the knowing ones are taken in; it lets them a little into the intricacies of fortune, and they, in ſome degreee, feel thoſe pangs, which they have ſo often inflicted on others. I frequently conſider a race-ground, Aſhton, as one of the moſt pleaſing ſights to an unconcerned ſpectator, the eye can poſſibly experience; but when we look upon it in a moral light, how cruel, how ridiculous and imprudent, does it make the brothers of the turf appear, to ſweat a poor devil, for ſix weeks together, down to a proper weight, and at laſt, to ſtrain its every nerve, and deeply imprint the ſpur in its gored bleeding ſides, muſt certainly be ſaid to be inhuman; and for a rational being to be ſtuck up at the ſtarting-poſt, venturing far greater bets than his fortune will allow of; in doubtful ſuſpenſe, with beating heart and anxious look, tracing his horſe's ſteps all round the courſe, when even the very jockey he employs to ride him, could often I believe, (was it proper) inform him, before he ſtarts, whether the beaſt is deſtined to win or not, muſt I think, be conſidered to be very fooliſh, as well as imprudent: but man will be what he is, it is hardly poſſible to reclaim him, and we, who are bleſt with

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leſs dangerous notions, have reaſon to thank our ſtars we are on the ſafe ſide. Farewel, my friend, you muſt not expect my return to Hampton-Court this great while, my uncle's converſation is ſo agreeable.

LETTER XXXVIII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

You aſtoniſh me, Leonora, the account you give of your uncle's ſtrange perſeverance amazes us all; whatever power he may have over his ſon, however filial regard may ſhut his eyes to a parent's faults, he cannot poſſibly think that my lively friend, can let his duplicity paſs unnoticed; you ſtand in a very different predicament from Mr. Morgan, and though I truly pity that unhappy young man, I cannot help ſaying that I rejoice you do ſo. What a dreadful ſituation muſt his be at preſent; deprived of the converſation of his friend Major Waltham, not permitted to attend him to his country retreat, expoſed to the continual frowns of a parent he adores, and inceſſantly perſecuted with the company of a woman he ſo thoroughly deteſts, it is hardly I think poſſible, to paint out any thing more ſhocking: how it will finiſh heaven only knows, but I truly wiſh your perſecution, as well as his, were at an end.

My mother is gone to pay ſome morning viſits to the poor in the neighbourhood, my aunt is in her dreſſing room, I therefore have gladly embraced this opportunity of retiring to the library,

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to converſe in the epiſtolary way, with the friend of my heart; oh was it poſſible, to convert this method to a real converſation, could I again ſee my Leonora ſeated at this table as formerly; how happy would it make me: I have a thouſand things to ſay to you, a thouſand fears for what to-morrow may produce, it is the day appointed for our firſt interview with the worthy Lucerne and his family, ſince that fatal morning when I walked towards Marſton vale: ſhould he appear dejected, ſhould his looks give me cauſe to think my refuſal has made him miſerable, how unhappy ſhall I be, I will however endeavour to ſooth the grief I have occaſioned, I will——heavens! what do I ſee; Lucerne riding up the avenue, with his ſervant on horſeback, and the travelling portmanteau behind him; what can this mean, he ſeems in haſte, his looks on a near approach appear greatly agitated, he rides cloſe to the window, but minds me not; his ſervant rings; I will go to the door and liſten: he aſks if my mother is at home, is anſwered in the negative, he deſires to ſpeak to my aunt in private; a univerſal tremor has ſeized me; he is carried into her dreſſing room: what unforeſeen, what unexpected event can have happened; alas it is now my lot to be in a continual ſtate of anxiety; formerly it was not ſo, when happy in my amiable Leonora's ſociety, each night was bleſt with calm repoſe, and every day was paſſed in peace. I muſt lay down my pen, I am too much agitated to proceed.—He is gone! my friend departed without even a glance towards me; his ſtay was ſhort, not half an hour at moſt; ah! ſhould—I am interrupted;—a meſſage from my aunt to deſire me to walk with her, I fly to put an end to this ſuſpenſe.—I am returned, your unhappy Iſabinda is returned; too true a propheteſs, too fatally are my conjectures confirmed; my aunt led the way to the wood; a deep ſilence prevailed,

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till we reached the little gothic temple which terminates, as you know, one of the walks; ſhe ſeated herſelf on the ſopha, whilſt I with trembling haſte, and agitated look, ſtood half bent in a liſtening poſture before her: ſhe was ſome time before ſhe could articulate a ſingle word; at laſt, after requeſting me to ſit down, ſhe began in theſe terms; "deareſt Amanda, much loved ſiſter, what a taſk is mine; an! how ſhall I unfold the dreadful tale I have to tell you; oh! Charles, Charles, why do you take ſo many ways to torture thoſe that love you." Here I ventured to break ſilence; "alas! ſaid I, "my brother," I could not proceed; tears ſtoped my utterance; it however brought the worthy woman to her recollection. "Iſabinda, ſaid ſhe," turning to me, "Mr. Lucerne has juſt been here, how to proceed, I hardly know; he came, my child, to make it his requeſt that your dear mother ſhould inſtantly be informed of her ſon's being in England; I ſtarted and aſked the reaſon of a wiſh ſo very different from his former determination; the account he gives of your brother is this, and you will yourſelf ſee the neceſſity of my immediate compliance with his deſire. He this morning received a letter from Lafere, who informs him that Sir Edward Beemont has been for ſome time paſt on a diſtant viſit in the country; that his maſter in two or three days after his departure, appeared at intervals greatly diſcompoſed, which he attributed to the loſs of his friend, as a very ſtrict intercourſe ſubſiſts betwixt them, but that in a little time he found it proceeded from a very different cauſe; it was occaſioned by a letter he had received from one of the Stanton party, to let him know the intention of paſſing a month at Richmond, which three of them had, namely, Burkwood, Weldon and Walſhton; that they had taken a lodging near him, and hoped to find him as ready to keep up the ſport (as they termed it)

it) as uſual. One of their ſervants coming to bring ſome things belonging to his maſter to the lodging, informed Lafere of the above, and added, that he was the perſon employed to take the houſe, and thought it would ſuit them well; that your brother for two or three days after their coming, ſhunned them as much as poſſible, but that they at laſt prevailed on him to ſup with them one evening; that he came home very much intoxicated at a late hour; that he has aſſociated with nobody but them ever ſince; and has been in a continued ſtate of intoxication for above this week paſt; that they are ſitting up all night, and ſcouring about the country all day, like a parcel of mad things; and the poor fellow ends his letter with ſaying, "Pray heaven my maſter may not fall into Mrs. Eſtifania's ſnares again! for I heard Mr. Walſhton the other day perſuading him to live in London." "Our worthy neighbour" continued my aunt, "is gone to Richmond, with a fixed determination not to come back without your brother." He promiſed me a letter in a day or two, to acquaint me with what had paſſed, and I ſhall then perhaps be better able to ſet about the dreadful undertaking I muſt accompliſh. He intends taking Charles to the parſonage at his return, previous to your mother's ſeeing him. Here my aunt ended. "Oh, my friend, what where my feelings!"—I ſat motionleſs. I had ſo thoroughly flattered myſelf that my brother's laſt dreadful adventure had entirely convinced him of the error of his ways, I had, ſince that time, always repreſented him to myſelf as ſo ſincere a convert, that words cannot expreſs the pangs which at that moment your poor Iſabinda experienced. My aunt waited for ſome time with great patience, in expectation of an anſwer, which, when I a little recovered myſelf, perceiving ſhe had fixed her attention on me, I was going to deliver in the beſt manner I could, when

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we received a moſt dreadful interruption indeed: —the door was burſt open by Hilliard the houſe-keeper, and my dear mother appeared, with tottering ſteps, leaning under her arm; a ghaſtly pale had overſpread her ſtill charming face; the tears ſtole ſilently down her cheeks, and that hand which has ſo often diſtributed its bountiful charity to the poor and needy which are round her, ſeemed to hang lifeleſs by her ſide: I ſtarted from my ſeat and helped to convey her to the ſopha, whilſt my aunt in mute aſtoniſhment, lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven: Alas! my friend; my good, my pious, tender parent, that inſtant fell ſenſeleſs into her ſiſter's arms. We were a great length of time before we could recover her, and in that ſhocking interval, learned from Hilliard, that my poor mother was brought home in a terrible ſituation by Mrs. Lucerne, in their poſtchaiſe. It ſeems ſhe had called at the parſonage in her walks, and found by their looks, and the departure of Lucerne for London, that ſomething particular had happened, and her enquiries were ſo urgent, that it was impoſſible for Caroline and her mother to conceal ſome part of the fatal truth. She knows my brother is in England, but is unacquainted with the reſt. "I would have come to have let you and Miſs know," continued ſhe, "that my miſtreſs was returned unwell, but ſhe would not ſuffer me, Madam, and has crawled in the condition you firſt ſaw her to this temple. Mrs. Lucerne being lame could not attend her here, but is waiting for your return to the houſe in the hall." My mother by this time opening her eyes, gazed wildly round her. "Where is he?" ſaid ſhe, languidly raiſing her head, "Where is my Charles? they tell me he is in England! Will he not come to ſee me? Will he not bleſs his longing mother's eyes again? Ah! why, why have I deſerved this treatment from him? Don't weep, my love, your tears affect me, deareſt

deareſt Iſabinda." My aunt, with the greateſt reſolution I ever ſaw, ſtifled her grief; told her that ſhe would ſee her ſon in a few days; that he was well and ſafely arrived in England: ſhe ended with ſaying, "You know, ſiſter, a foreign clime does not agree with every one." To be ſhort, my mother, at laſt, conſented to be carried home and put to bed, fatigued to the greateſt degree: ſhe is now, thank God, in a profound ſleep. O! Leonora, pray for us all. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIX.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

PRAY for you, yes, deareſt Iſabinda, my conſtant interceſſions to the divine power are attended with fervent wiſhes for your happineſs; may his peculiar providence bleſs my friend; heal the wounds which the ſtrong ſenſibility he has given her occaſions, and reſtore the tender parent to her fond feeling daughter's arms again. I likewiſe now and then put up a prayer for Charles, but muſt own it is of a very different caſt; as I cannot help ſincerely wiſhing him a ſecond time to ſuffer (and that not in a ſmall degree) for the evils he is continually inflicting on thoſe, which ought to be held moſt dear to him. No remorſe of conſcience ſeems to diſturb him long, no contrition further than a momentary one waits his errors, and dupe to the follies and crimes of others, he is ever ready to turn aſide from the right road, as they lead the way. Worthy Lucerne, how different is thy conduct; and how much do I lament the unhappy lot which attends

you; myſterious are the ways of heaven, for ſurely elſe your path thro' life would be ſtrewed with roſes, not with thorns —George Morgan truly deſerves your pity; his preſent ſituation is indeed deplorable; my uncle ſeeing the ſoftneſs of his temper, tyranniſes ſtill more and more over him; the natural ſerioufneſs of his diſpoſition is converted into a profound melancholy: I tremble for the conſequences: his roſy bloom is entirely gone, and ſeveral prognoſtics of a deep decline appear more viſible every day; we were alone this morning for a few minutes, his return to my anxious enquiries after his welfare was a deep ſigh, attended with theſe words; "Your goodneſs, amiable Leonora, diffuſes itſelf to all around, it even condeſcends to take notice of an outcaſt from a father's love; the continual anxiety I have for ſome time paſt experienced, has occaſioned a fever, which if not ſoon removed will terminate my exiſtence; wretched as I am, I hope I am not culpable, in ſincerely wiſhing it may be ſo; my days are paſſed in irkſome attendance on a woman I abhor, and my nights in reſtleſs inquietude: in obedience to Sir John's commands, I am drove into the city every day it is true, and moſt likely ſhall continue to be ſo, as long as I have ſtrength to go there; this weak frame may perhaps fall a ſacrifice to his orders, but alas that is as far as my duty will extend; my life, I will readily give up to his pleaſure, but his hand ſhall never be united according to his preſent deſire; no never, never, will I"—Here poor Letitia entered, and a very diſtreſſing ſcene enſued. She hung round her brother's neck, tears falling in ſhowers down her cheeks; Oh! Iſabinda, had you but ſeen him then; viewed the tender concern which appeared in his countenance, the ſmiles he ſtrove to put on to leſſen her grief, you would have thought him more than human. I could not ſuppreſs my tears; when oh! ſhame to ſay it, the door opened, and my uncle himſelf appeared, and addreſſing himſelf to his

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ſon in a very ſtern manner, "Why, Mr. Morgan, are you here ſtill? you ſhould have been in the city long before this." "The carriage has not yet been announced, Sir," replied George, in a faint voice. "Announced," retorted he, "if you had acted as you ought to have done, you would have been in the front parlour in expectation of its coming, it has been at the door ſome time; ſet off directly you raſcal, or I'll make you." "Raſcal," ſighed out George, as he croſſed the room, "Oh, Sir," and he burſt into a flood of tears. Letitia caught hold of his arm, and left the room with him; while Sir John unmoved at the diſtreſs of the amiable young man, ſeated himſelf oppoſite to me. I cannot deſcribe to you the rage which his countenance was fluſhed with." "Obſtinate wretch," ſaid he, "you ſhall bend to my will, or—" "fall down dead at your feet," ſaid I, with ſome heat, (for I could bear it no longer) "which will certainly be the caſe," continued I, "Sir; the alteration in your ſon's looks is too viſible not to ſtrike every one but yourſelf; your cruelty, I muſt tell you, knows no bounds, and you will in a very ſhort time ſee the effects of it." He, almoſt choaked with the fury he was in, retorted, "Upon my ſoul, I am finely off, with a ſon that dares to be ſo refractory to my will, and a niece that preſumes to reprehend me for my conduct; but, Madam, I muſt tell you, notwithſtanding your reproofs, that I am determined to carry my point; we go into Kent next week, as you know, I could have wiſhed this wedding over before our departure, but as my ſon has choſen to delay the proceedings, I ſhall inform you, that Mr. Fogworth has yielded to his daughter's being our gueſt at Morgan-Hall this ſummer, and their nuptials are to be celebrated before our return; the ſettlements are now drawing." "And can you, Sir," replied I, "ſacrifice ſo amiable a ſon? can you join his refined underſtanding, to the rude, uncultivated talents of an untaught romp? think how miſerable

he muſt be, united to ſuch a wife, and for pity's ſake relinquiſh your deſign." Unmoved by any thing but paſſion, he returned this anſwer; "I think, Leonora, you are here meddling in what you have no buſineſs, I did not come to adviſe with you about the diſpoſal of my ſon; but to acquaint you that Lord Daffodil waits on you in private this evening, with offers, which you will entirely forfeit my favour if you do not accept of; I ſhall therefore expect you to give him the reception his rank and fortune entitles him to, and hope you will not be ſuch a curſed fool as to refuſe his offer." My patience now entirely left me; "I am quite aſtoniſhed, Sir," ſaid I, "at your proceedings; how often have I told you, that had he the univerſe at his command, I would not accept of him; if you wiſh Lord Daffodil to be groſsly affronted," continued I, "you are in the right to requeſt this interview, but mean and deſpicable as he is, I do not deſire to be the author of an inſult to any one, and therefore muſt tell you, I will not ſee him; and if you ſhould invite him to Morgan-hall, I will moſt aſſuredly quit your houſe the inſtant he enters it; you have no right to dictate to me in the choice of a huſband, and I certainly will not comply with your deſires on this occaſion." I was aſtoniſhed, Iſabinda, at my own courage, but much more ſo when I ſaw my uncle's behaviour entirely changed; diſtreſſed to the greateſt degree, he ſubmitted ſo far as to entreat me in the humbleſt terms to accept of Lord Daffodil, and finding I ſtill remained obdurate, he ſhed tears, and at laſt was mean enough, even to fall at my feet, and beg me to have pity on a ruined uncle; "I am inevitably ruined," continued he, ("I will confeſs, by my own folly,) unleſs George and you will extricate me; I have contracted a large debt of honor," (think of the expreſſion, my dear) to "Lord Daffodil, and am indebted a great ſum to Fogworth." "Riſe, Sir," ſaid I, interrupting him here (for I was greatly moved at

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ſeeing him in that poſture) " riſe ; it ill becomes Sir John Morgan to be ſeen in this ſituation by any one, and particularly ſo for his own niece to ſuffer it." He roſe abaſhed at my rebuke; but perceiving me greatly ſoftened, as ſoon as he had reſumed his ſeat, went on in this manner, " You cannot, therefore, dear Nora," (you obſerve the expreſſion, I hope Iſabinda) an expreſſion ſo tender and ſo entirely new to me, " you cannot, therefore, dear Nora," continued he, " wonder at my anxious wiſhes to extricate myſelf; Lord Daffodil told me yeſterday, that tired of the endleſs ſuſpence he had for ſome months paſt experienced, he wiſhed to know his fate from your own lips ; he, therefore, requeſted me to appoint this evening, as I before mentioned, for an interview, and if the anſwer he received did not turn out ſatisfactory, he almoſt openly ſaid, that he ſhould inſiſt upon the twenty thouſand pounds, I am aſhamed to ſay I am indebted to him, previous to my going into Kent." " And of what ſignification, Sir," replied I, " will my ſeeing his lordſhip be, for I never will, that is my fixt determination, be united to him; and I am ſure every part of my behaviour muſt have convinced him that I had formed that reſolution." " But you could give him hopes." returned my uncle, " you could allow of his viſits at Morgan-Hall this ſummer ; a few months will extricate me out of the trouble I am at preſent in, and you will ſave a near relation from ruin." " What Sir," ſaid I, " give a man hopes which I never intend to fulfil!" " Allow him to viſit you in the country upon my account." " When I deſpiſe and abhor the very ſight of him ; baſe thought ; no, Leonora Fenbrook can never be guilty of ſuch duplicity : I could wiſh to extricate you, Sir, (notwithſtanding I am ſhocked by the inhuman behaviour to your ſon) was it in my power ſo to do ; but I find I muſt be explicit upon the preſent occaſion ; you will be ſo obliging to acquaint Lord Daffodil that ſo far

from granting the requeſted interview, I make it my earneſt deſire, that he will never viſit me more; that I reject the offers he means to honor me with, and from this inſtant put an end to all intercourſe betwixt us." Sir John turned pale as death during this laſt ſpeech; he again had recourſe to the moſt earneſt ſupplications; again he ſhed tears, and would again, had not I ſtopt him, have knelt before me: "And can you then, Nora," ſaid he, "reſolve to ſee your uncle arreſted—dragged to priſon—the houſe where you have been ſo long an inhabitant a ſcene of confuſion and deſolation? Can you think of no method to extricate me? Alas! another twelvemonth would entirely retrieve all! I have ſums due to me of the ſame kind to that, I have contracted to Lord Daffodil, which I am certain will be paid me in that time, and are to a much greater amount than what I am indebted to him. Does not therefore your good nature, your good ſenſe, and I ſhould hope, ſome little regard for the memory of your worthy mother, ſuggeſt to you that there is a way, without the leaſt detriment to yourſelf, or further communication with the beforementioned Peer, (who never ſhall, by my permiſſion, ſee you more?) I ſay, do not they ſuggeſt to you, that it is in your power to ſave a parent's brother from ruin? "Oh! Sir," cried I, with great emotion, "name the means! I cannot bear to ſee you ſo afflicted; name but the means, and any thing, except the ſacrifice you firſt mentioned, that is in my power, ſhall be done to ſave you." "Heavens bleſs you! you are an angel;" exclaimed he: "it is only this my deareſt niece—if you will conſent to ſign a paper, which I will take care ſhall be drawn up in a proper manner, to lend me the ſum I am indebted to Lord Daffodil, the day you come of age, which I will promiſe to repay you in ſix months after that period, you will, without running the leaſt riſk yourſelf, ſave me from deſtruction; as I am very certain I could then get a friend to diſcharge

charge the debt for me." I was thunder-ſtruck by this propoſal; the worthy Mr. Hartley's cautions roſe to my view that inſtant; he had requeſted me not to ſet my name to any thing but what was abſolutely requiſite, during the remainder of my minority. I hung my head in ſilent dejection; which he perceiving, renewed the object with greater force. The image of my dear, my worthy mother, ſuch as in my infancy I remembered her, roſe to my view; could I let her brother ſuffer the ignominy which muſt attend my refuſal; I had heard but a few days before from Mr. Morgan, that his father had greatly increaſed the mortgage on his eſtates; that the ſteward was fearful his debts were far more numerous than he thought for; and that a very ſmall part of his land now remained clear, except what was tied down for the payment of Lady Morgan's jointure: I therefore knew him to be undone; looked on him as he ſat pleading his cauſe before me, not only with pity, but affection; conſidered that I ſhould have ſtill fifty thouſand pounds left, and oh, do not chide me, Iſabinda! forgive me, Mrs. Danvers, and my much-eſteemed Mrs. Aſhton! rebuke me not, good and ſenſible Mr. Hartley! I at laſt yielded to his requeſt. After thanking me a thouſand times, he roſe to get the note drawn, which he ſaid he could do in the neighbourhood, and return in about a quarter of an hour, requeſting me to read it before I ſigned, which I did; but whilſt he was gone, having meditated on poor George's ſituation, I requeſted him with great earneſtneſs, to give him leave to viſit his friend the Major for a month or ſix weeks, when we went to Morgan-hall. He could not refuſe my requeſt. I have therefore obtained a ſhort reſpite for him. Adieu.

LETTER XL.

MRS. DANVERS TO LEONORA.

We are all very unhappy at the receipt of your laſt letter; indeed, deareſt Leonora, you have been much to blame, greatly to blame, to truſt to any repreſentation of Sir John's. How often have I warned you of his duplicity! How often begged you to ſhun the rock you have now ſplit on! Mrs. Aſhton, though greatly agitated at the ſight of her ſon, is under the utmoſt inquietude on your account; "Write to Miſs Fenbrook," ſaid ſhe, dear ſiſter, to me this morning, "I am unequal to the taſk; the arrival of my much-lov'd Charles, joined to my fears for Leonora, renders my taking up the pen almoſt impracticable; tell her from me, that I could not have thought a girl of her ſenſe could ſo eaſily have been a prey of, by ſuch a bare-faced villain as her uncle has throughout ſhown himſelf; that as I conſider her in the light of a ſecond daughter, almoſt as dear to me as my own Iſabinda: I think myſelf authorized to remonſtrate with her; join your intreaties with mine, Priſcilla, to leave Sir John and come to us directly; if not, at leaſt endeavour to prevail with her to give us a ſolemn promiſe, that let her uncle's diſtreſs be what it will, ſhe never will lend him (as he terms it) another farthing. Ruin attends your refuſing her requeſts.

LETTER

LETTER XLI.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

How fatally do I experience the truth of that maxim which tells us, perfect happineſs is not to be found below! elated with the recovery of my dear mother's ſpirits, the ſucceſs of my aunt's friendly deception, which paſſed ſo plauſibly with her, that ſhe firmly believes a ſlow fever obliged her ſon to return to his native land; and delighted with the arrival of our dear wandering truant; I fondly thought myſelf at the ſummit of human bliſs, and never dreamed that fate could give the leaſt alloy to it; alas! Leonora my evening thoughts and noon tide realities were totally different; for at twelve this day your laſt fatal letter was delivered to me; wild with concern, bereft entirely of prudence, I ran, I flew down to the parlour, where our family were aſſembled in converſation with Lucerne, who luckily was their only viſitor at that time, and going up haſtily to my aunt, gave the ſheets, which contained the dreadful tidings into her hands, with difficulty reached the firſt empty chair, and burſt into a flood of tears; my mother, Lucerne, and Charles roſe directly, and came towards me, while my aunt exclaimed: "from Leonora: oh! ſiſter, you may gueſs the contents." "I do," ſaid my amiable parent, "this dear girl's friendly concern convinces me,—Sir John is what we ever thought him," returned my aunt, (as ſhe read on, "a complicated villain: cruel to his ſon, and baſely ſo to his too credulous ward. My mother's hands were by this time claſp'd in mine; my brother with a look of the greateſt aſtoniſhment, tenderly begged me to be compoſed, and in the ſame breath intreated my

aunt to unravel the myſtery to him; while Lucerne who had flown out of the room at ſight of my diſtreſs, returned with a glaſs of water, which relieved me very greatly. Oh! my friend, had you then ſeen the concern you have occaſioned in our little circle; did you know how great our fears are on your account, you would comply with my dear mother's requeſts tranſmitted to you by Mrs. Danvers. My brother is very uneaſy about you; as his viſits to Sir John's, though frequent were but ſhort ones, and entirely to you, he made no obſervations on your uncle; Stanton and Varniſh I ſuppoſe kept their friend's ſecret, he was therefore an entire ſtranger to the diſmal ſtate of his affairs. At one moment he deplores the friend of his childhood; the next inſtant, he lifts up his hands, and with a look of ſurpriſe, aſks how it was poſſible for Sir John to diſſipate ſo large a fortune: and when anſwered by gaming; ſhakes his head, and recounts ſeveral unhappy circumſtances he has been witneſs of, which have attended that pernicious vice: Lucerne too, your favourite Lucerne, is miſerable on your account; have pity on us all, my much loved friend, make us happy in accepting my mother's invitation; but if you are ſtill ſo inflexibly good, (for I muſt term it ſo,) as to remain under the deteſted roof where you are at preſent ſituated, to comfort the diſtreſſed; at leaſt relieve our fears, by complying with her other requeſt; good angels guard you: write directly.

LETTER XLII.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

WRITE to you directly, yes, deareſt Iſabinda, friend of my heart, your tender fears for me, ſhall be mitigated as far as I am able; I encloſe a letter

ter to Mrs. Danvers, containing the promiſe requeſted by your worthy mother, which I have given in the moſt ſolemn manner I am capable of. My ſincere thanks are due for Mrs. Aſhton's kind invitation, which I cannot comply with; your own philanthropy, my dear Iſabinda, will, I am ſure, ſuggeſt to you, that my inflexibility (as you term it,) at this time, is abſolutely right. Can I leave poor George in his preſent unhappy ſituation? who is to comfort the drooping Letitia during his abſence, if permitted to go to the Major's? and on his return, who (oh dreadful thought,) who is to ſuſtain his ſpirits againſt his approaching wretched nuptials, but myſelf. I have no patience with Lady Morgan, ſhe ſeems totally inſenſible to the alteration in her ſon, and talks of the decorations on the occaſion, in as careleſs a manner, as if ſhe intended them for a private ball, or ſome very pleaſing feſtivity; her dreſs is ordered, which is to be extremely elegant, as well as Letitia's; Sir John's is likewiſe to be very handſome; and they have, unknown to poor George, ordered a ſuperb ſuit for him on the occaſion; I have, for my part, flatly refuſed being in new. How can I join in paying a compliment to a deſpicable woman, who, I am certain will be the deſtruction of the moſt amiable man in the world; he was unable to riſe all day yeſterday, which was paſſed by us, in a moſt deplorable manner. Letitia was obliged to accompany her mother to a party in the evening; Sir John was abſent, (I ſuppoſe at his club) I therefore ſtept up to George in the interim, and found him in a burning fever; he ſeemed however, greatly relieved by the opportunity I gave him, of unburthening himſelf, and ſaid, he never could obey his father's commmands. When I told him the permiſſion I had got for him to viſit the Major, he faintly ſmiled, and feebly graſping my hand, thanked me for my goodneſs, as ſuch a reſpite would be like heaven to him; but ſaid,

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his father had not mentioned his intentions of any ſuch indulgence. During our converſation, I heard my uncle's knock at the door, which obliged me haſtily to leave poor George, after having prevailed on him to take ſome ſuſtenance; and in about half an hour, his ſervant told me, he had left him faſt aſleep. As we go to Morgan-hall the day after to-morrow, I thought it beſt to remind Sir John of his promiſe, I therefore ventured down into the parlour, where, I was told he was writing; he received me with great civility, but judge my ſurpriſe, oh Iſabinda, when upon my mentioning it to him, he returned this anſwer; "your late kindneſs to me, Leonora, affected me to ſuch a degree, that I knew not what I did; it made me promiſe impoſſibilities; think, my dear, how impracticable a thing you have demanded of me; as Miſs Fogworth is to accompany us into the country the day after to-morrow, George's abſence would be a direct affront: I however mentioned your requeſt to her father, who was extremely nettled at it; and ſaid, he ſhould not ſend his daughter on a fool's errand, no not he, and if it was my intentiou to let my ſon go galloping to another part of the world, his daughter ſhould ſtay in the city with him, that ſhe ſhould; I have therefore, Leonora," continued he, (ſtammering as he ſpoke), "been obliged to promiſe him, that my ſon ſhall defer the intended viſit to the Major, till after his marriage." I was greatly diſappointed, but turned it off as well as I could. We then entered into a long converſation concerning George; I repreſented him as he really was, extremely ill; Sir John ſmiled, and ſaid, "that the air of Kent, and a good wife would cure him; I anſwered, that I could not be of that mind as to the latter; that his ſon's was a fixed averſion, and that I foreſaw nothing but miſery attending ſuch an union: he reddened, but checking the riſing anger, anſwered with tolerable calmneſs, that

that he was ſorry for it, as things had gone too far to recede; "my word is pledged," continued he, "Leonora, and this wedding muſt be accompliſhed:" I remonſtrated, but in vain; deaf to the voice of nature, he will neither hear nor ſee any thing, but through the falſe glaſs of ſelf-intereſt. I begged him at laſt, to go up and ſee his ſon; "ſurely Sir," ſaid I, "the diſmal ſituation, in which you would find Mr. Morgan, muſt awaken you from the delirium, for I cannot help calling it ſo; in which you are involved; the parent muſt feel, though the man is ſo obdurate." He anſwered with great warmth, "you are going too far, Leonora, you almoſt make a monſter of me;" you can gueſs, Iſabinda, my thoughts on his expreſſion. "I enquired," continued he, "ſince I came home, about my ſon, and was told he was in a fine ſlumber; I think I ſhould deſerve the character of inhumanity indeed, was I to awake him from it; I cannot therefore, in this reſpect, obey your commands." In ſhort, I found there was a ſubterfuge in every thing he ſaid, and that I muſt drop the ſubject; he would have introduced Lord Daffodil into the converſation, but I told him, I ſhould inſtantly quit the room if he did.

LEONORA in continuation.

I RESUME my pen; after my laſt night's diſappointment, you may eaſily imagine ſleep entirely forſook me, not a wink had I till towards morning; when troubled dreams, and reſtleſs ſlumbers, took place of waking inquietude, till Betty again called me to miſerable realities. Unable to amuſe myſelf either with my work or a book, when dreſſed,

dreſſed, I ſat myſelf down and ruminated on the melancholy ſcenes which I muſt now ſhortly be a witneſs to: I had ſat ſome time muſing in this manner, when I was all of a ſudden rouſed from the ſtupor, by a footſtep, which I was certain was my uncle's; he paſſed my chamber door, and Letitia's, and I diſtinctly heard him open his ſon's which is at the other end of the gallery: delighted with this proof of parental affection, I was congratulating myſelf on the ſucceſs of my laſt night's requeſt to him, when through the unſhut door of his ſon's apartment, for he hardly ſtaid long enough with him to faſten it, I diſtinctly heard theſe words: "Very ill; and ſo ſir, you think this feint is to paſs with me, get up directly I ſay;" ſome reply was made by Mr. Morgan, but in ſo faint a voice, it did not reach me: "Phoo! phoo!" returned Sir John, "air and exerciſe are the beſt things in the world to remove the laſſitude you complain of; I ſhall ſend Iſaac to you, (which is George's footman,) riſe directly, for the chariot will be at the door, to convey you into the city as ſoon as we have breakfaſted, and your mother is nearly dreſſed I can aſſure you." Saying this, he left the room, paſſed down ſtairs, and the inſtant after, I heard him calling to Williams, to order the carriage, and ſend his ſon's attendant up to him: was there ever ſuch a father? George, very ſoon after I went down, came tottering into our parlour, pale as death; his eyes ſunk in his head, and the tears, notwithſtanding his endeavours to check them, trickling down his cheeks: he had reſted but ill, notwithſtanding appearances, were ſo flattering when his ſervant left him, but I had hardly time to enquire, for my uncle almoſt followed him in; a conſtrained converſation on all ſides enſued, till we were ſummoned into the breakfaſt room. Not a bit did the poor young man eat, but ſwallowed every cup of tea with that avidity, which ever attends

attends extreme thirſt: I could not help ſaying, that I thought a phyſician and his own room were much properer for him, than a journey into the city. My uncle gave me a very ſour look, and returned for anſwer, "that he was very well, if he would think himſelf ſo." "Well Sir," replied the dear Letitia, and burſt into tears: ſhe was immediately ordered to quit the room; and the chariot very ſoon after arriving, Mr. Morgan, with a heavy heart, ſet forth to pay his laſt London viſit to his intended bride.——I write by bits and ſcraps, and ſhall do ſo now, till we are arrived at Morgan-hall; as I will not cloſe my letter till we are got ſafe there, which I wiſh to heaven we were. Every thing here appears to wear a ſtrange face. My uncle, I find, does not intend to ſtir out all day; every knock at the door is attended with anxious enquiries from him, who it is: all viſitors are denied. Reſtleſs and uneaſy, I hear him walking up and down the library; the ſervants in aſtoniſhment whiſper to each other, as they paſs; for Letitia's anxiety will not ſuffer the parlour door to be ſhut. Lady Morgan ſeemed greatly agitated at breakfaſt: her ſon has orders not to return till night, when he is to eſcort Miſs Fogworth here; in ſhort all is confuſion, every thing deplorable; it is all over with Sir John, Iſabinda, he dares not venture out, I am certain of it; heaven guard us all —— We have dined; if ſeeing the diſhes brought in and carried away again can be termed ſo, for they returned almoſt untaſted. My uncle ſat at table, with a face one moment red as crimſon, the next covered with a livid paleneſs. I have this inſtant heard him give orders for his horſes to be ready to-morrow an hour before day break!—imprudent man, in what horrors has he plunged himſelf! he dares not quit London, but in the dark.

Miſs

Miſs Fogworth is arrived; Mr. Morgan and ſhe came juſt as we were ſitting down to ſupper, pert, vain, and flippant as ſhe ever was, I think her greatly increaſed in thoſe reſpects, as ſhe approaches nearer to miſery. George earneſtly requeſted to retire to his apartment, ſoon after their arrival, and had permiſſion ſo to do; he is in one reſpect happy; he has not like Letitia and I, been a ſpectator of the horrors of this day; even our trunks and boxes were ſent after dark to a diſtant part of the town, where Betty tells me, the cart was waiting to receive them, which uſed, in happier times, by day light to be loaded at the door. Inceſſant knocks have harraſſed Sir John the live-long day, accompanied by loud enquiries for him, importunate demands for money, and vows that they will be put off no longer. We are all now retired to our ſeparate apartments, not to reſt I am certain; I once had thoughts of ſitting up all night; why ſhould I go to bed? thought I, ſleep will forſake me there; but I have now determined otherwiſe, and after having recommended myſelf to that divine protection, the innocent may ſurely hope to claim, will undreſs; therefore good night, my deareſt friend — — — — —

Rouſed by my uncle's voice below, I ſtarted up, and lighting my candle by the watch-light, roſe two hours before day-break. The ſervants are all in commotion: oh peace, thou daughter of ſerenity, how art thou baniſhed, for ever fled this pompous dwelling!— Ah! who's there?— Letitia enters all in tears; ſhe has been down to offer her ſervice at the breakfaſt table,—I muſt leave off.—She found her father gloomy, ſullen, diſcontented; he wanted not her ſervice, ſhould take ſome chocolate; and was ſtorming at poor Williams, becauſe the horſes were not come, though it ſtill wants an hour and a half of day-break. She has been liſtening at her brother's door, all is ſtill there, thank heaven; he is ſo far removed from

from the great ſtair-caſe, that he is out of reach of the uproar we experience: they have likewiſe taken care to lodge Miſs Fogworth out of hearing.—I am ſummoned to Lady Morgan—poor woman, ſhe has been in fits, Iſabinda; though I love her not, I ſincerely pity her. When Sir John roſe, ſhe waked, and hearing, ſome little time after, the noiſe which his frantic behaviour occaſioned, got up; unaſſiſted by any body, ſhe roſe; and throwing her looſe gown on her, crawled down ſtairs, in order to try to pacify him. She was met by Williams at the bottom, who earneſtly entreated her to go back again, but ſhe would not, and leaning on his arm, at laſt with a ſlow pace, reached the library: the inſtant Sir John ſaw her, his former rage redoubled; how did ſhe dare, he ſaid, to diſobey his commands, and leave her bed? She knelt before him, and in that humble poſture, begged him to be compoſed; yes, my friend, this imperious woman humbly ſued, but ſued in vain; for oh, (ſhame to ſay it) while ſhe continued her ſupplications, baſe man, he ſtruck her: yes, Iſabinda, he ſtruck her more than once; and had not Williams interpoſed, would certainly have killed her. She fell ſenſeleſs on the ground, and was carried by Williams, aſſiſted by Johnſon and one of the footmen, to her own apartments. We have brought her to herſelf again:—thank heaven the horſes are at laſt arrived, providentially a quarter of an hour before the time appointed. The madman, for I cannot call him by any other name, is ſet off, and the houſe is now quiet. I will lie down in my cloaths and try to get a little reſt, as we are not to ſet off till one o'clock, having but thirty miles to travel: I have adviſed poor Letitia to follow my example.———

We none of us roſe this morning till eleven, but Miſs Fogworth: "La Miſs," ſays ſhe, when ſhe firſt ſaw me, "do people of faſhion uſually keep

keep ſuch late hours? I ſhould have been ſtarved to death, if the butler had not brought ſome chocolate into the parlour; I am ſure papa and I are always up by ſeven." I made anſwer that Lady Morgan very ſeldom breakfaſted before twelve; and was relieved from further converſation by a ſummons from her. She ſhed tears when ſhe ſaw me, but was ſoon compoſed upon my repreſenting to her, that Sir John muſt have reached his journey's end by that time. To be ſhort, we ſet off about one o'clock; Lady Morgan, Miſs Fogworth, and George, in the coach; Letitia and I in the poſt-chaiſe; reached Morganhall in good time, and found Sir John tolerably ſerene. Adieu, my Love.

LETTER XLIII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

How exceedingly have I been affected by my much loved Leonora's account, and how ſincerely do I lament the diſtreſs, her friendſhip for her valuable couſins, determines her to remain a ſpectator of; ſurely of all the brutal beings a knowledge of human nature preſents to our view, Sir John Morgan ſtands the foremoſt; loſt, unhappy man, to revenge himſelf upon thoſe objects which ought to ſtand neareſt and deareſt in his eſteem, for the misfortunes which he himſelf has plunged them into: I hope, however, for your ſake, as well as the innocent ſufferers, he will remain for this ſummer at leaſt, unmoleſted; but as to poor Mr. Morgan, there is not a ſhadow of relief for him,

him, as he muſt inevitably now, fall a ſacrifice to his father's crimes: deteſted be the very name of Plutus, in conjunction with Hymen's, it repreſents to my view nothing but diſcord and miſery. My brother ſeems perfectly happy in his preſent ſituation; I cannot ſay I think he looks well, but there is one advantage in it, as it helps to carry on the deceit my aunt has put on her ſiſter: his ſpirits are likewiſe, by no means equal to what they uſed to be, not but he is at ſome times lively, but very ſoon ſinks again. Lucerne has told my aunt, that he had great difficulty at firſt in getting him to liſten to his advice: when he got to Richmond, he inſtantly repaired to Charles's houſe; as Lafere had informed him of the exact ſpot where it ſtood, he had no difficulty in finding it out: the poor man happened to open the door to him, and was rejoiced to ſee him; but ſhook his head, and ſaid his maſter was at his uſual rendezvous, with his three friends, where he would remain till five or ſix o'clock the next morning. "I thought," continued the worthy Lucerne, "that though the ſcene I muſt go through, would be very irkſome to me, it would be beſt to preſent myſelf before them directly, as I ſhould, at leaſt, get Charles away three or four hours before the uſual time: accordingly, though a great deal fatigued with my journey, for I had changed horſes, and rode it through in a day, I followed Lafere, and in a few minutes arrived at the houſe, which is occupied by Captain Aſhton's intimates, (for friends I cannot call them;) it was now about ten o'clock, and I found by their appearance and Lafere's information, they had ſet to their bottle ever ſince dinner. Burkwood, whom I have often ſeen, was in the chair; the native redneſs of his countenance increaſed almoſt to crimſon, his waiſtcoat unbuttoned, and uncurled black hair, gave him the exact appearance of one of the Bacchanals belonging to Comus's crew; he was ſinging when

when I entered the room, a jovial ſong, in which the reſt, unmindful of me, joined, when it was their turn, in chorus. Your nephew always neat in his appearance, was lying at his full length on a ſopha they had drawn to the table, with his back to the door. Weldon ſat on the oppoſite ſide, and Walſhton at the bottom. They were all pretty much intoxicated, and I ſuppoſe had not heard the knock. When the ſong was ended, they began filling their glaſſes; and as Burkwood was going to give the toaſt, he happened to caſt his eyes on me, as I ſtood almoſt at Walſhton's elbow: "Why who the devil have we got here," cried he; "Where, where, where," replied the other three; "Why there," returned he, "cloſe at your elbow, Walſhy. A limb of divinity, faith; ſome methodiſt preacher I warrant him, (hiccuping as he ſpoke) come my lads give him a half pint bumper, and then for a ſermon." While he was ſpeaking, the reſt turned round to take a view of me, and as ſoon as he had ended, they all ſtarted up, and Charles approached me with the half pint bumper in his hand: "Come, my buck," cried he, "this by command of our worthy toaſt maſter;" ſaying this, he reeled quite up to me, and ſtaring me full in the face; notwithſtanding the condition he was in, knew me directly; when letting fall the glaſs, he exclaimed faintly, "It is Lucerne," and throwing himſelf again on the ſopha, hid his face from me. As Walſhton and Weldon had ſeen me before, (though not ſo often as Burkwood) they all knew me immediately, and were tolerably civil; but Burkwood ſtill contended, that I ought to drink the half pint bumper and preach a ſermon. I pleaded in excuſe that I had come a long journey, was very weary, and wiſhed to retire to reſt, and at laſt prevailed with your nephew to leave them. My arguments for quitting Richmond were all the next day ineffectual, but by keeping

him

him entirely from his companions, I the day after prevailed with him; and have once more reſtored him to you. Adieu.

LETTER XLIV.

MR. MORGAN TO MAJOR WALTHAM.

How uncertain are all the enjoyments of this life! and how unſtable, Waltham, is every ſatisfaction we poor mortals experience! On my quitting Oxford and attending my friend to London, I had but one uneaſineſs, one drawback to the pleaſures which at firſt ſurrounded me: the reception I received from my parents, though not of that tender kind as my ſanguine wiſhes had formed, was, however, cordial enough to ſatisfy any man of leſs delicate feelings than myſelf; and I rather aſcribe the little diſſatisfaction it occaſioned in me, to a peculiarity in my own diſpoſition, than to any failure of affection in them. My Letitia's fond attention—her hourly ſtudy to pleaſe—the amiable Leonora's agreeable ſociety, formed to delight, and happy by delighting; joined to the magnificence of my father's dwelling, and the gaieties which at firſt are ſo faſcinating to a youthful mind, left but one wiſh unaccompliſhed: Alas! my friend, how different is now my ſituation: but I need not deſcribe it to you; as you was yourſelf ſo often an eye witneſs of the dreadful alteration which long before your departure had taken place. Oh! Waltham, Waltham, what muſt that heart experience, which is forced by duty to yield to an object it abhors, at the

the very time it is fondly devoted to another? You have often aſked me, my friend, aſked me with more anxiety than I could have thought a man of your gaiety was capable of expreſſing, what was the occaſion of the very great change of diſpoſition you obſerved in me, after a few months abſence, which my reſidence at Oxford had occaſioned betwixt us? Before that period I was gay and lively as yourſelf. I always waved the ſubject, but my overcharged heart muſt this interval burſt, was I not now to communicate it. I was indeed in hopes, through the lovely Leonora's friendly interceſſion to my father, to have ſpent ſome time with you, previous to my——. I ſhudder at the word; but even that is denied me; I muſt therefore take this method of revealing a ſtory, which, till now has been a ſecret to all. Soon after my return to Oxford, at the end of the laſt vacation, ſo agreeably as uſual paſſed with my friend; I was ſauntering, on a very delightful morning, in one of thoſe fine gardens with which that city ſo much abounds; when I perceived, at a little diſtance before me, two ladies, the younger of which, though I could not ſee her face, immediately attracted my attention: there was ſomething in her air and manner peculiarly engaging. Ah, Waltham, I ſee, I view the charmer at this inſtant as ſhe then appeared to me. Not knowing what I did, I was guilty of very great unpoliteneſs, for having quickened my pace, I was ſoon near enough to attend to their converſation: "Do not miſtake me, my dear," ſaid the elder of the two, "I am far from wiſhing you to ſacrifice yourſelf contrary to your inclinations; but yet I think, as your brother is ſo earneſt for the match, as it is his particular friend, and as your father ſo much wiſhes it, it is a pity you cannot conquer your averſion." "Oh, Almeria!" replied the other (in the moſt mournful ſweeteſt accents), name it not! I cannot marry Jacaſto; there is

ſomething

ſomething in his nature that I ever look on with abhorrence; educated and living as he has done from his childhood, in Spain; he has imbibed all the haughtineſs and ſeverity ſo peculiar to that nation; he is my brother's particular friend, 'tis true, and for that reaſon, I have often tried to get the better of my repugnance, but 'tis impoſſible; and I cannot help ſaying, I think, with all his good qualities, Jerome is much to blame (as I have freely confeſſed to him the diſlike I have to his friend), for perſiſting in perſuading my father to the completion of a match which muſt be my ruin." "But you do not conſider, my deareſt Euphraſia," returned the elder lady, "the obligations your brother has to him." "Yes," ſaid the charmer, ſighing, "I conſider them all, Almeria; but greatly as I love Jerome, they cannot conquer my averſion for Jacaſto; I have therefore this morning wrote to my father in a manner which I hope will awaken all his tenderneſs for me; and as I did not dare to diſcover to him the retreat your friendſhip has afforded me here, leſt my brother and his friend ſhould come in ſearch of me, have deſired him to direct as uſual to your London houſe; and Captain Jenkinſon has promiſed me to bring his anſwer, if I am favoured with one, when he returns to you on Saturday." "Alas! Euphraſia," replied the other lady, "this ſcheme, I fear, will not be attended with any ſucceſs; every thing either in my huſband's or my power, which will contribute to your happineſs, you may be certain of; but I am fearful the letter you have wrote will only induce your father to revoke his promiſe, and rob us of my friend; and ſhould he any way find out that you are not with us in London, I cannot anſwer for the conſequence." "You do not know my father, Almeria," returned the fair one, "he is all goodneſs! he promiſed me a receſs from the perſecutions of Jacaſto, in your friendly ſociety; and he will not,

I am

I am ſure, revoke that promiſe for the time he has limited: and am I not under your roof the ſame here as in London? he is at preſent, indeed, blinded by Jerome's obſtinate perſeverance; but he is the beſt of fathers, and the beſt of men." I heard no more; for they inſtantly turned down another walk, where I had not an opportunity of following them, being accoſted that moment by a fellow-ſtudent, who overtook me. All day, all night ſhe was never from my thoughts; the image of Euphraſia, though a ſtranger to her face, haunted me every where. I returned each morning, wet or dry, to thoſe gardens where I had firſt beheld the charmer, but without ſucceſs. A week afterwards having received an invitation to dine with a friend about four miles from Oxford, as I was riding there, I was ſtruck with a reſemblance of Euphraſia and her friend, in two ladies that were on horſeback, at a diſtance before me: I immediately galloped on; and juſt at the inſtant as I reached them, a boy darting acroſs the road from under a hedge, frighted Euphraſia's horſe, which ſtarting, threw its lovely burthen off him; and had it not been for me, would have dragged her at a great pace entangled in the ſtirrup. At the hazard of my own life, Waltham, I preſerved the unknown fair: I croſſed the horſe as it was ſetting off, and catching hold of the bridle, held it till the ſervants came up to my aſſiſtance; when diſmounting, I approached the fainting charmer, and conveyed her to the path-way; by this time the other lady was helped off her horſe, which had ſtopped very compoſedly when its rider pulled the reins, and coming up to me, thanked me in the politeſt manner imaginable, which I hardly ſtaid to liſten to; for perceiving a cottage at a very little diſtance, I darted like lightning to it, and returned with water, which inſtantly brought the fair one to herſelf: but oh! Waltham, if I before admired her air, her ſhape, her mein, think what

became

became of me, when I viewed the loveliest face I ever beheld. Her mild soft eyes beamed with ineffable sweetness on me: Her lips (though not at that time adorned with their accustomed red), charmed me, while they breathed the sweetest accents in thanks to her deliverer. You may assure yourself, my friend dined without my company that day: I never once thought of him. Alas! why do I dwell on scenes which now cannot, must not return? Oh, fatal hour! oh, day in which my peace for ever fled! To be short, I waited on her home; begged permission to return in the evening. More and more lost in love, I ventured, in a few interviews, to reveal my passion; the lovely fair one, with blushes owned, I was not indifferent to her; confessed her present situation with her father was such, that time alone could contribute to our felicity; and would by no means be prevailed on to receive a letter from me, on her return home; which was in about six weeks after our acquaintance first commenced. Several letters in that interval having passed betwixt her and her father, who was at last prevailed on to relinquish all thoughts of her match with Jacasto; and wrote her word in his last, that he and his son Jerome had set out the day before on their return to Spain, so that she might now remain with him entirely unmolested, as he wished her to come home again directly. You may easily imagine, Waltham, our parting was dreadful; I pressed her to tell me the place of her abode, was desired by the charmer not to enquire into it: "All must be left to chance," said she, "Mr. Morgan; but this I will assure you, nor time nor chance will ever make me false to you; as every thing in my power shall be done with my father, to refuse any future application but yours; attempt not therefore to find me out, you may perhaps at some distant period, hear of Euphrasia Melcomb." Oh! Waltham, the parting interview is present

with me; thoſe lovely eyes, thoſe lips, that face is ever here; nor can a father's power ever baniſh them from me. Think of the contraſt which I every day behold; then think, oh! think, if it is in my power to unite my ſelf to ſuch deformity; and yet my father—Oh! Waltham, there is a ſecret muſt not be revealed, which obliged your friend to ſacrifice himſelf, and what is ſtill worſe, for ever, ever, renounce the ſweet Euphraſia Melcomb." Alas! I know not her parentage, fortune, any thing: I endeavoured to prevail with Mrs. Jenkinſon to diſcloſe them after her departure, but in vain; ſhe bid me reſt ſatisfied; that as Euphraſia knew my addreſs, I might perhaps at ſome diſtant period know more. Had fortune been my friend, I ſhould not have reſted ſo; but till I was of age, I reflected I had nothing but my father's allowance, and after that period ſo very poor a pittance, that even then, it would not be in my power to keep Euphraſia, in the manner I ought to introduce my wife and ſhe deſerves, if her fortune was ſmall; and if large, I could not have the preſumption to hope, to be accepted by her family; I, therefore, as I ſaid before, remained tolerably eaſy, and enjoyed the diverſions which I was obliged to partake of, whether I had liked them or not; but this curſed marriage has ſpoiled all: Oh: Waltham, I cannot, cannot unite myſelf to Miſs Fogworth; and yet to ſave a father: I have ſaid too much, my friend, I never intended even to you to have revealed the dreadful ſecret. My father has this moment deſired me to give you an invitation to the deteſted event which is in a few days to take place; fly, my friend, fly to Morgan-hall, to my relief; your preſence will at leaſt in ſome meaſure alleviate my care, though nothing now can ever ſooth my mind to peace. Farewel.

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

MAJOR WALTHAM TO MR. MORGAN.

FLY to your relief! yes, Morgan, yes, my friend, every relief in Waltham's power ſhall be adminiſtered. I ſet out the day after to-morrow in queſt of you. Upon my ſoul theſe women are the peſt, the very bane of ſociety; if they are poor and handſome, they make our hearts ache; and if rich and ugly, our parents take care to do it for them: I am ſure mine has run a *pitipatation* for ſome few months paſt; not owing to the cruelty of the fair one, who has given every modeſt prudent encouragement to my wiſhes, I could myſelf deſire, but my uncle, Anſted, George, there has been the ſtumbling block; and till yeſterday evening whenever I have urged him to give his conſent to make me happy, it has always been returned with broken ſentences; a kind of inward murmuring; when I might do better—believed her worthy; her perſon was to be ſure what any man might like—but where was the money; not a ſingle ſixpence at preſent he knew; how could a man of my ſpirit think of marrying without the pence—To which I have ever anſwered, ſhe is the only woman I can like; her family as to rank are unexceptionable; her perſon and manners, you yourſelf, Sir, always confeſs ſo; and even my preſent fortune is enough for both: why, therefore theſe conſtant denials to my wiſhes? Strongly preſſed in this manner, he laſt night yielded to my requeſt; and I was this morning ſet down to write to you, when your melancholy epiſtle arrived. Yes, George, I have ſeen your Letitia's perfections in as favourable a light as it is poſſible for your brotherly affection to have placed them; and have reaſon to think my addreſſes will

not be received unfavourably by her; not that I ever gave her occaſion to imagine I intended to make any, further than the very great attention I laſt winter ſhewed her; for I abhor the man that even by a ſingle word or glance, tries to gain the affection of any woman, unleſs he is certain it is in his power, as well as will, to fulfil thoſe (in general) equivocal engagements. It is this reaſon, and only this, which prevents my ſetting out directly, as I have determined to ſettle every neceſſary preparation previous to my departure. You will think me a very vain puppy, Morgan, to be ſo ſure of ſucceſs; but I am certain of my friend's approbation: I have reaſon to hope the object of my affections is not indifferent; and faith, George, your father's affairs are well known to be in ſo deranged a ſtate, that he will be heartily glad to get rid of his daughter without a preſent portion, for I do not deſire a ſingle penny with her. My uncle is at laſt generoſity itſelf, which will enable me to keep your and my Letitia, equal to my wiſhes. There is one good will reſult to you yourſelf, my friend, on this event, it will at leaſt protract the time of your eſpouſals, for I ſhall inſiſt upon Sir John's deferring your nuptials till mine are ready to take place; and lawyers are ſometimes very dilatory fellows: in the mean time, let Miſs Fogworth take care; I have had ſeveral ſchemes in my head to rid you of her. Once I thought of taking her myſelf, but then, Letitia, with her bewitching ſmiles, ſtept in the way, and put that project entirely out of my head: then I thought, as Miſs Fenbrook ſcorns Lord Daffodil, of making a match betwixt them; but that won't do, I believe: What think you, as ſhe is ſo good a romp, of my running her round the garden and popping her into the great canal at the end of it. A good project! it will do faith. Adieu, George, I write to your father by this poſt.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

AFTER the numerous diſagreeable incidents I have communicated to my Iſabinda, I am ſure ſhe will be greatly rejoiced at one happy event, which will now ſpeedily take place; yes, my friend, yes, idol of your Leonora's heart, the intelligence I have to relate, will I am ſure, give pleaſure to ſuch a mind as yours: the dear unhappy innocent Letitia is going to be united to the worthy Major Waltham. I have for ſome time paſt ſuſpected her attachment to him, but was fearful (though I evidently ſaw he liked her,) that his volatile diſpoſition would not have been ſtruck deep enough to combat the very great ſcruples his uncle Anſted would certainly have on the occaſion; it is however thank heaven entirely concluded on, and he has been for this week paſt, an inhabitant of Morgan-Hall: it is likewiſe productive of a very ſatisfactory delay to poor George, as his nuptials, through the friendly interceſſion of the Major, are poſtponed till Letitia's are ready to take place, which will not be ſooner than a month. You cannot imagine how this little reprieve has revived Mr. Morgan, he looks, he ſpeaks, nay, in every reſpect he appears quite another man! his addreſs, his polite manner is returned again, and his countenance has greatly recovered its roſy bloom: poor man he often reminds me of the ſuſpended fate of a criminal, the execution, (though delayed,) ſtill hovers round him, and in a ſhort time muſt inevitably happen. Sir John, as you may imagine, is quite delighted with the ſucceſs of this ſcheme, for I could plainly ſee, during the courſe of laſt winter, that every art in his power was made uſe of, to

draw the Major to the houſe: alas! had his other match been equally laudable, how happy would our preſent party have been, and how different my thoughts in relation to an uncle, I cannot help having with all his faults a regard for. I am interrupted! ——— Heavens! my deareſt Iſabinda, what a dreadful ſcene have I experienced! am I not to paſs a week, nay, hardly a day, without freſh proofs of Sir John's duplicity? You will hardly believe me, when I tell you, that the interruption was occaſioned by Lord Daffodil; the ſervant told me "a gentleman deſired to ſpeak to me below;" I muſt own I went down, unwillingly, for as that fop Varniſh is here, I ſuppoſed it was a fetch of his, to entertain me with the nonſenſe he has of late plagued me with, whenever he has had an opportunity of being alone with me; as I croſſed the paſſage to go down the ſtairs, I to my great ſurpriſe, ſaw a phaeton and four, driving round the lawn to the ſtables, but as the ſervants had diſmounted, and one of Sir John's footmen had the care of it, I could not tell to whom it belonged. On my entrance into the parlour, I found his little lordſhip adjuſting his dreſs at the glaſs: I ſtarted at the ſight of him; when turning about and approaching me, with a low bow, attended with enquiries after my health; he was anſwered by me in this manner:" "I could not have thought, Lord Daffodil, after what paſſed previous to my leaving town, that I ſhould ever have ſeen you more at my uncle's whilſt I remained with him; I muſt ſay, that I think your behaviour is unprecedented, it neither denotes the man of faſhion, nor indeed even the common politeneſs which attends thoſe, who are in the leaſt indebted to their parents for education. What my lord can you propoſe from ſuch a ſtep as this?" Propoſe, "madam, propoſe," ſaid he, "fore God, you aſtoniſh me, had I not permiſſion from you, on your quitting London to pay my reſpects to you here?" "Indeed my lord, you had not, this prevarication

rication will be of no benefit to you, I do aſſure you:" "Prevarication," retorted he, ſtaring, "did not you Miſs Fenbrook commiſſion Sir John, to tell me, I ſhould be no unwelcome viſitor at Morgan-hall, though it was not then in your power to admit of even an hour's converſation in Harley-ſtreet; and did not you ſay,"—"I ſaid nothing my lord, that could in the leaſt juſtify your proceedings; on the contrary"—"faith, Madam," interrupting me in his turn, "this is a little extraordinary; this behaviour to a man, (appearing greatly ruffled as he ſpoke) who has had encouragement enough to bring the ſettlements with him, aſtoniſhes me; greatly aſtoniſhes me, indeed Madam." I now ſtared in my turn; my uncle's guilt too plainly appeared to me. "For God's ſake," ſaid I, "my Lord, calm yourſelf a little;" for he was walking up and down the room with great emotion, "let me beg of you to be ſeated, and let us endeavour to come to an explanation, before the family return from a morning viſit, they are gone to pay;" he reſumed as much compoſure, upon my ſaying this, as was in his power, and turning pale, (with a look of conſternation,) politely enough offered me his hand, and led me to a ſofa at the other end of the room; where, being ſeated, he, in a very ſolemn and correct manner, much more ſo than I thought him capable of, convinced me, that my uncle had duped us both; nay, even had gone ſo far, as to promiſe him my conſenting hand, on the ſame day that united his ſon to Miſs Fogworth. Amazed, aſtoniſhed at Sir John's perfidy, I ſat for ſome time motionleſs, at laſt—"my Lord," ſaid I, "give me leave to aſk you one queſtion; did you ever hint to Sir John (be not ſurpriſed Sir, for I am well acquainted with the ſum he is indebted to you;) did you ever, I ſay, demand that money to be paid you directly, in caſe of my refuſal:" "Never, by heavens," returned he, "I ſee too plainly, and have ever ſeen, Miſs Fen-

brook, your rooted diſlike to me; but you may believe me, when I ſay, it was an indelicacy which I am incapable of, and knowing the baronet's affairs as well as I do, am thoroughly convinced, it would have been of no ſervice to me if I had;" "but did he not" returned I, "ſhew you a promiſſory note of mine, when I came of age, which would enable him to diſcharge that debt?" "Never, by my ſoul," replied he, "and of what uſe will that be to him, as ſignatures under age are never binding; ſo far from it, I declare in the moſt ſolemn manner, madam, that I have never, from the firſt inſtant I ſaw you, mentioned the debt to him." "Good heavens," ſaid I, lifting up my hands, "what a man is my uncle! and has he never, my Lord, told you my fixed determination not to be your's? I have often entreated him not to give the leaſt encouragement to your addreſſes." "I ſee too plainly," returned he, "we have both reaſon to complain greatly of your uncle's behaviour; ſo far, madam, from the leaſt diſcouragement, he has always laughed at me for my fears; has attributed your diſdain to maidenly reſerve, and the contempt you have ſometimes too evidently ſhewed, to female coquetry; and mean and deſpicable," continued he, ſighing, "as I know you think me, I ſhould not have been abject enough, to have continued my ſuit for any time, had I not been induced to it by the greateſt encouragement from him; your fortune, Miſs Fenbrook, I will freely own, at firſt, was the reaſon for my wiſhing for an introduction to you; but I very ſoon found your perſon and merit, greatly over balanced all pecuniary motives; and I can ſincerely ſay, it would be the greateſt happineſs to me to call you mine, was you not miſtreſs of a ſingle farthing." (I bowed to him for the compliment); "but, as that, I ſee, is impoſſible, (ſighing again) I will, if you deſire it, put off the overtures I have made to Sir John, myſelf; and you may reſt aſſured, the unhappy man

you

you ſee before you, will never moleſt you more." "My Lord," ſaid I, "my utmoſt thanks are due to you for your behaviour on this occaſion; I will frankly confeſs to you, I never can be yours; it is my wiſh, that you would decline yourſelf, to Sir John, all future overtures; but I have likewiſe, a farther requeſt;" "name it, madam." "It is, my Lord, your promiſe not to demand the ſum my uncle is indebted to you, till he is in a ſituation to enable him to diſcharge it, without greatly diſtreſſing, himſelf." "Alas, madam," ſaid he, "that I can eaſily promiſe; my eſtate is ſo large, even had I lent the money, inſtead of won it, that I ſhould hardly miſs that ſum; your other wiſh, Miſs Fenbrook, is much more difficult, my admiration of you riſes every moment; but, madam, you ſhall be obeyed in every thing; I hope I ſhall at leaſt, oblige you to confeſs, that your notions of Lord Daffodil, were, in ſome reſpects, erroneous.' Why, what a noble creature, has this man at laſt turned out! but I cannot like him well enough, for all that, to paſs my life with him; to be ſhort, Iſabinda, when the family returned, Sir John found my Lord and I upon a very amicable footing; after dinner, they had a private conference in the library; he took his leave in the evening, in a very reſpectful manner, and I believe, has made Sir John perfectly eaſy as to the money, for he ſeems by his looks to be contented. Adieu, my friend.

LETTER XLVII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

THANK heaven, at laſt, my Leonora, I have received happy tidings. Innocent, good-natured, friendly Miſs Morgan, how much do I rejoice on the approaching event! Life, my beloved friend, notwithſtanding what a parcel of four Cynics may affirm, is always chequered: nay, ſome few glide through it on an unruffled ſtream; but the much greater part experience ſtorms and calms in a continual viciſſitude; and ſo much the more, as their ill ſucceſs at one period preponderates, ſo much greater is their reaſon to rejoice at another, for the bleſſings ſhowered by Providence on them; terrible as we think poor Mr. Morgan's doom, it will however half alleviate the ſolemnity his nuptials will occaſion at Bellefield, when we conſider the double knot which will on that day be tied. My brother every day recovers more and more his looks and accuſtomed good ſpirits: how different is he now from what he was in his laſt viſit! he hardly appears to me the ſame Charles Aſhton: pleaſed with every thing he ſees, he partakes with chearfulneſs in all our rural ſports; riding, walking, fiſhing; in ſhort, all our little paſtimes ſo well known to my Leonora, are purſued by him with the greateſt alacrity. Oh! could you be a witneſs to the maternal love ſignificant in every glance of his amiable mother; the friendly aſſiduity of his Lucerne; the good-humoured raillery of his aunt: and I may ſubjoin the fondneſs of a ſiſter who hangs on every word he utters, it would, I am certain, give you the greateſt ſatisfaction, and our happi-

neſs

neſs would be compleat. Sweet ſocial days, bleſt and ſerene, why are you not to laſt for ever? but I will not anticipate future evil; heaven avert it! and yet, my friend, I know not why, but often in the midſt of our moſt jocund ſcenes, when many of our worthy neighbours partake of our little feſtive balls or concerts, even in the midſt of the dance, a ſudden chillneſs ſtrikes through me, which ſeems to predict ſome future ill. Author of every good! omniſcient power! if ever Iſabinda in thought or word, or act, did aught which met with approbation from thy all-ſeeing eye, oh! hear her now; turn every evil which thou meaneſt to inflict on thoſe moſt dear to her, from them, and let thy vengeance fall alone on me; mine be the ſufferings; mine alone the care; and every peace of mind and joy be theirs.——I am calmer now:—don't be alarmed my love, tears have relieved me. I am ſure I have no reaſon for my fears, nothing that can in the leaſt anticipate evil. My mother, brother, aunt and friend all well, and Lucerne, the amiable Lucerne, chearful and compoſed; and were it not that now and then a tender glance too evidently betrays what paſſes in the heart, I ſhould think him entirely cured of his hopeleſs love: why then am I not at eaſe? but I will not dive too much into futurity; the preſent time alone is mine, and that is happy. I will, if poſſible, ſhake off theſe fears, enjoy the ſmiling hour, and leave to heaven the reſt. As ſome time has elapſed ſince I received your laſt letter, we are all in fearful expectation of the next; poor Mr. Morgan, what a bride is deſtined for him! I however, heartily congratulate you, on the diſmiſſion of Lord Daffodil. My aunt laughed at your praiſing his lordſhip's merit, and ſaid he had indeed made a virtue of neceſſity, for he could not act otherwiſe. Adieu, my Leonora.

LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

I AM concerned, greatly concerned at the peruſal of my friend's laſt letter. Why Iſabinda, why, my love, ſearch into futurity, and create evils which I will hope are only in your own imagination? The ſluggiſh blood creeps too ſlowly through the veins of my young friend, or elſe this melancholy would ne'er have taken hold on her; great exerciſe and ſalutary medicine, if properly adminiſtered, will chaſe theſe chimeras from you: the body muſt, though unknown to yourſelf, be diſordered, or elſe the mind would never be ſo enervated as you deſcribe it. Let me entreat you to write no more in this plaintive ſtrain; indeed, my dear, if I receive ſuch another epiſtle from you, I ſhall grow quite angry.—You judge rightly in imagining this letter will reveal the doom of poor George Morgan; I ſhall not cloſe it till the double nuptials, which are to take place the day after to morrow, are over. You muſt excuſe many interruptions, which will unavoidably take place during the recital. It is hardly poſſibly to deſcribe the ſituation poor Mr. Morgan is in at preſent; his countenance, while this day at dinner, too evidently betrayed the emotions he felt within; his complexion ſometimes livid pale, then inſtantly flushing to crimſon red; he hardly eat a ſingle morſel, but continual calls for drink, thoroughly denoted how parched and feveriſh his trouble had made him. He this evening as we walked in the garden, took an opportunity to ſingle me out; "Leonora," ſaid he, ſighing, "your tender concern for an unhappy wretch, merits my utmoſt acknowledgments; thoſe expreſſive eyes of yours, have

have often revealed the friendſhip you have for me; ought I not therefore to thank you for it? from my very ſoul I do: but think, oh! think, my fair one, if I this day experience the diſtreſs too viſible to you, what muſt my feelings be to-morrow when thoſe curſed, curſed marriage articles are to be ſigned? and as to the day after, how will it be poſſible for me to ſurvive it? it is indeed my hope I ſhall not. May it pleaſe Heaven to leave me lifeleſs at that altar, where I muſt ſacrifice each wiſh and each fond hope for ever." He ended here, as I thought; when turning to look at him, I could perceive nothiug but the whites of his eyes; his lips moved, he ſeemed to be in fervent prayer, but ſo inarticulate, that I could not catch a word, till at the cloſe I diſtinctly heard him pronounce the name of Euphraſia. "Dear Euphraſia, and bleſs her heaven!" The ſecret is at laſt revealed; think, Iſabinda, what he muſt have ſuffered; alas! I thought his deteſtation of Miſs Fogworth was the occaſion of his care; I knew not till that moment that his heart was devoted to another. I thought it beſt to take no notice of what he had uttered, but conjured him, when he came a little to himſelf, to inform his father of the ſtate of his mind. "Tell him," ſaid I, "you cannot conquer your averſion for your deſtined bride; the ſtate you are reduced to, muſt too plainly diſcloſe to him the ſufferings you feel within: tell him you have done every thing in your power to obey him; he muſt too evidently know you have. Sir John is now in the library, I will attend you to him, perhaps my preſence may be of uſe. We will unite our endeavours to prevail on him to relinquiſh this odious deſign. Come, my couſin, take courage, and all may yet be well." He ſtood ſome minutes ſilent, irreſolute what to do; at laſt he ſnatched my hand, and preſſing it to his lips, called me his angelic deliverer. I was obliged to remind him, that perhaps we might not

ſucceed

ſucceed with my uncle: the very thought appeared to terrify him; he ſtruck his hand upon his forehead, and for ſome time ſtood motionleſs; at length, reſuming his accuſtomed compoſure, he took my hand again, and begged me to lead him to his father. "I cannot," cried he, "be more miſerable than I am at preſent; there, let me at his feet implore, either a releaſe from my doom, or that death which will relieve me from all my miſery."—In this manner we reached the library door; I opened it, and perceived Sir John writing at the table: never, Iſabinda, was I witneſs to ſuch a ſcene! the unfortunate young man fell at his father's feet; tears trickling down his cheeks, and ſobs entirely depriving him of the uſe of ſpeech. Sir John raiſed his eyes, and looking firſt on his ſon and then on me, demanded with a very ſtern air, what was the occaſion of our intruſion? Poor George lifting up his ſtreaming eyes to his father, endeavoured to ſpeak, but could not. "The condition you ſee your ſon in, Sir," ſaid I, calmly, "needs no explanation; he has much too long endeavoured to reſign himſelf to your will; the conflict is at laſt too great; he finds himſelf incapable of being united according to your deſires; he begs me to intercede for him; revoke, my dear Sir, revoke before it is too late, his doom; for believe what I ſay, I am very certain he cannot ſurvive his nuptials." Never did I ſee ſuch fury as appeared in my uncle's countenance; he ſtarted off his ſeat, and ſpurning the unfortunate youth from him, "Be gone, wretch!" ſaid he, "and inſult me no more with ſuch propoſals: Have I not often told you, Leonora, it is my fixed determination, that this wedding ſhall be accompliſhed? my word is paſſed, and I ſwear by every thing that is ſacred, I will keep to it." "Oh! Sir," ſaid I, with tears, "conſider before you make ſo raſh a vow: yield, for heaven's ſake, yield to your ſon's requeſt." I was almoſt as frantic as

him:

him: I knelt down by the unfortunate youth, and uſed every argument in my power, but in vain. Mr. Morgan again raiſed his eyes to his father; "And will you, can you, Sir," ſaid he, (with a look that I thought would have mollified the anger of the fierceſt ſavage), "can you think of devoting your ſon to death?" The father, inſtead of being ſoftened, appeared more incenſed by his ſon's voice; and throwing himſelf upon him, as he knelt before him, ſtruck his head once or twice ſo hard upon the ground that the poor young man's noſe fell a bleeding ſo immoderately, that I really thought Sir John had killed him. "Inhuman wretch!" ſaid I, "you have been the death of your ſon!" Not in the leaſt ſoftened by the condition he ſaw him in, he would have ſtruck him again if I had not perceived his intent, and held his arm; I then flew like lightning to the bell, and rang ſo hard that two or three of the footmen immediately made their appearance. I ordered them to carry away the now ſenſeleſs George Morgan to his own room, which they did, and laid him on the bed. We brought him in a little time to himſelf again, when I was overjoyed to find that all the hurt he had received, was a blow upon the noſe which had ſet it a bleeding. He is now gone to reſt, (that is, if his grief will allow him any), and I have deſired his own man to ſit up with him. Sir John appeared very gloomy at ſupper; no enquiries were made after poor George, but by Letitia and the Major, who went up to him as ſoon as ſupper was over. Miſs Fogworth toſſed her head while I was telling them he was very ill; and, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile ſaid, "Oh! he will be better to-morrow: the arrival of my father will quite revive him:" and then turn'd to Mr. Varniſh, who uſually ſits betwixt her and I at table, and coquetted with him in her wonted manner. It is late; the whole family are

retired

retired to reſt: I will try to take ſome repoſe, and if poſſible, for a ſhort time, forget the unhappy ſufferer.

LEONORA IN CONTINUATION.

Mr. Morgan is better to-day but oh! Iſabinda, was you to ſee him, your tender heart would bleed for him: the loſs of blood has occaſioned an extreme paleneſs, and the blows his ſavage father gave him on the noſe, has turned it black; never did I ſee ſuch a ſpectacle: his languid eyes, his faltering ſpeech, oh! heavens, would melt a heart of ſtone, but not his father's; gloomy, reſerved and haughty, the tyrant iſſues his commands, with pride uncontrouled, while his ſon, like the tender plant bending before a northern wind, gives way and bows beneath the ſtroke. Letitia, poor Letitia, though on the eve of her ſo wiſhed for nuptials is in tears, and the Major is unhappy. Lady Morgan's mind ſeems entirely bent on to-morrow: the decorations of her own ſweet perſon, and the table, employ all her thoughts. Miſs Fogworth, light as air, trips merrily from glaſs to glaſs; views herſelf with admiration, and is every minute wiſhing her father's arrival, that ſhe may ſee the finery deſtined to adorn her bridal day. You may imagine your Leonora is not inactive; my taſk is as far as I can, to chear the drooping ſpirits of George Morgan, to dry Letitia's tears, and reſtore the Major's gaiety. The double articles are to be ſigned this evening, the ſame lawyer draws up both the marriage ſettlements: I tremble for the event, if ſuch the prelude to the bridal day, what alas! muſt the nuptial ceremony itſelf occaſion—Mr. Fogworth is arrived, and has brought the lawyer with him;

him; I ſee them alight as I ſit writing at my window: Good Heavens! what heaps of trunks and bandboxes, are taking from the poſt-chaiſe! Why if the little bride is deſtined to ſtay here the whole ſummer, and receives and returns each viſit in different dreſſes, ſhe will hardly be able to get through the almoſt endleſs variety which thoſe trunks muſt contain.——— Alas! what do I ſee, a little deal box is given with great care into Fogworth's own hands; the ſettlements, the fatal ſettlements are, ſurely Iſabinda, there encloſed; with what pleaſure he looks at it, rejoiced at the ſafe arrival of that, which baniſhes poor George's peace of mind for ever.—I can look no longer; this fatal ſight has entirely overcome my curioſity. I will go down ſtairs, perhaps my appearance at this juncture may be of uſe to Mr. Morgan—I have paid my compliments below; Heavens! what an agitation was poor George in, at the ſight of old Fogworth; who, upon his entrance into the parlour, hobbled up to him, and ſhewing him the box, cried out, "Courage my lad, take courage, here they are, want nothing but a little ſigning and ſealing, to ſecure her your's for ever; you ſhall have her, my boy, thou ſhalt have Doll, though hundreds of rivals ſtrove to oppoſe you." (Mr. Morgan bowed low, but was ſpeechleſs;) he then turned to Sir John, gave him a hearty ſhake of the hand, and approaching the ladies, for you may be ſure all were aſſembled to receive him, gave each as hearty a ſmack on the cheek; held his lovely daughter for ſome time in his arms, and buſſed her moſt cordially; told the major he was heartily glad to find he had followed his friend's example, as young fellows were beſt married; and turning at laſt to Varniſh, ſeemed, I thought, to be conſidering, whether he was to addreſs him as male or female; then giving him a little nod, with a ſhrug of his ſhoulders, and a loud laugh, ſallied to the other end of the parlour. Miſs

Fogworth

Fogworth was in ſo great a hurry to ſee her finery, that ſhe ſoon left the room. George got into the garden for a little air, and I took the opportunity of retiring to acquaint my Iſabinda, with theſe particulars.———We have had a very profuſe dinner, but Betty tells me it is nothing to the entertainment we are to have to-morrow. Miſs Fogworth is elated beyond meaſure; her finery has certainly turned her head; I declare her ſpirits are quite intolerable, and knowing poor Mr. Morgan's oppreſſed ſituation, ſhe really makes me unhappy.——— Unhappy, did I ſay, oh! Iſabinda, the ſcene I have been a witneſs of this evening, has made me miſerable; we are all at laſt retired to our reſpective chambers, ſleep will entirely forſake me this night I am ſure, I may therefore as well ſit up, and write to my friend, as preſs an uncomfortable bed in watchful inquietude.———Dinner and tea time paſſed, as you may imagine, among the greater part of us, in ſtupidity and uneaſineſs; when the latter was over, Mr. Fogworth turned to Sir John, and with great eagerneſs, deſired to proceed to buſineſs: Sir John as eagerly, ordered Williams to bring candles; and as ſoon as the drawing room was properly adjuſted, the lawyer produced the marriage ſettlements. Major Waltham fore-ſeeing the trouble, which muſt attend that fatal one, which was to unite his friend to Miſs Fogworth; begged that his with Letitia might be read and executed firſt, which was at laſt agreed to, with ſome reluctance, on old Fogworth's part, and joyfully ſigned and ſealed by all parties. I contrived to place myſelf next to Mr. Morgan, fearful of the conſequences which might enſue, when his turn took place; heavens! what an univerſal trembling ſeized him, when the lawyer firſt begun; tears ſeveral times ran down his cheeks; while boiſterous Miſs could hardly contain her joy, which frequently broke out in ill-timed laughter as their

marriage

marriage articles were ſome time reading, it, however, was productive of one good effect, it recovered poor George ſo far, that he at laſt ſat in appearance, like a ſtatue; and was rouzed from his ſenſeleſs ſtate by the lawyer, who addreſſed him in theſe words: "It is your turn, Mr. Morgan, to ſign now;" this was repeated three times, before it had any effect; when thoroughly underſtanding what was meant, the poor young man ſtarted, turned pale, and deeply ſighing, quitted his chair; he approached the table with a ſlow pace, gave his father a ſupplicating look, which was returned by a piercing glance from Sir John, and a requeſt to the lawyer to ſhew his ſon where to ſign. I followed him cloſe, unknowing what I did; he ſeated himſelf, took the pen and made an effort to ſign, but trembled ſo he could not; thrice the pen fell from his hand, and was taken up again; he gave a deep groan, and ſat motionleſs: When awakened from his lethargy by Sir John's loud commands to him to ſign directly, he wrote his name; dropped a tear as he wrote, and riſing haſtily from his ſeat, turning towards me, fell ſenſeleſs into my arms; had not the lawyer been cloſe by, it would not have been in my power to have ſuſtained him. Poor Letitia flew like lightning to his aſſiſtance, the Major followed her; while the reſt of the company remained unmoved; all but the brute his father, who ſeeing we had placed him on a ſofa, rung the bell, and ordered two or three of the ſervants to convey him to his own chamber, where Letitia, the Major, and I attended him; he was for ſome time delirious, but we at laſt brought him to his ſenſes, and he ſeemed when we parted, to lie in a ſtate of ſtupefaction; again his own ſervant has orders to ſit up with him; unfortunate man; Letitia would fain have watched by him all night, but was prevailed on by the Major and me to relinquiſh her deſign: unable to attend the ſupper time, ſhe retired

retired directly into her room. Major Waltham and I went down, very few enquiries were made after poor George, and Miſs Fogworth ſat down to table, gay and unconcerned as ever. I could perceive Lady Morgan had ſhed tears, but endeavoured to hide her concern. Sir John bit his lips, reddened when he ſaw us, and with difficulty kept down the riſing paſſion; but what ſurpriſed me moſt of all, was old Fogworth's indifference; he certainly muſt have often ſeen Mr. Morgan's averſion to his daughter, ſuch reiterated proofs could not have eſcaped his obſervation; fooliſh unthinking man, and baſe as fooliſh; how can your daughter be expected to be happy with an huſband, who is united to her with ſuch viſible, ſuch uncommon averſion; and how can you be ſo cruel to join with that huſband's own parent, in ſacrificing ſo amiable a young man, for the falſe joys which rank and filthy lucre bring? What a couple will they make; deteſtation, ſtrong deteſtation on his part, and total indifference, mixed with the greateſt tincture of coquetry I ever ſaw in woman, (to other men) on her's; how miſerable muſt this marriage be! I have this day learned that we are to have the happineſs of her company at Morgan hall, till the family return to town; I ſuppoſe they think by that time poor George will be ſufficiently broke into the married ſtate, to live quietly alone with his wife; that is, provided the fair lady has not broke his heart before that period: beſides Fogworth is too provident to refuſe the father's offered manſion for the preſent, and there is time enough he ſays betwixt this and winter, to ſettle them in a houſe in town; I grow weary, adieu, my love; the dreadful concluſion of my letter belongs to to-morrow; I have prepared my little bridal adornments in compliment to Letitia, otherwiſe ſhould not have beſtowed a thought on them— —— ——

The

The fatal day is arrived; a very few hours reſt (if broken ſlumbers and dreadful dreams can be called refreſhment) has ſufficed: I was this morning up ſoon after day-break, and well I was ſo; I had ſcarcely roſe before Letitia entered my room all in tears; ſhe had ſlipped on her morning dreſs, and was going to her brother, whoſe ſervant had informed her, his maſter had had a terrible night; the calm ſtupor in which we left him ſoon ſubſided; and reſtleſs anxiety took its place: I prevailed on her to ſtay till I was fit to accompany her, and we went together to his chamber. We found him up, and in his looſe gown; a burning heat had taken poſſeſſion of his face, he ſat loſt in thought, and did not perceive us till Letitia claſped him in her arms; the interview betwixt them was a mournful one indeed, and required all the addreſs I was miſtreſs of, to ſoften; we have at laſt left him tolerably compoſed, and preparing for his nuptials; after embracing Letitia in the moſt ardent manner, and teſtifying his wiſhes for her happineſs, he turned to me; "Think not, my amiable Leonora," ſaid he, "though you have for ſome time paſt beheld the dreadful conflicts I have experienced, that you have before you a weak irreſolute creature, incapable of performing the promiſe he has bound himſelf to; no, Leonora, no; laſt night I ſigned away each hope, and every joy for ever, and I am this morning determined to give myſelf up to that promiſe and eternal wretchedneſs. It requires ſtrong reſolution and ſteadineſs, to act the part I muſt this day perform, but the very great abhorrence in which I have ever held a baſe action, will I am certain carry me through the horrors, which muſt neceſſarily attend the ſacrifice I am going to make; adieu, I ſee you no more till I am ready for the altar:" ſaying this, he gave each a hand, it was not in the power of either to anſwer him, and he ſilently led us to our reſpective apartments; took

his

his leave with a deep ſigh, and returned to his own chamber. Poor Letitia was ſome time before ſhe recovered herſelf enough, to ſit down to the toilet, which ſhe at laſt did, at my earneſt interceſſion; (for when her brother quitted me, I went directly to her,) and having prevailed on her to dreſs, am now returned back to prepare myſelf, to aſſiſt at the two ſuch different nuptials, as are to be this morning celebrated. — — — — — —

A few words more are allowed me, before the irrevocable knots are tied; we are all dreſſed and ready to ſet off; Letitia looks like a little angel in her bridal white; and poor George though depreſſed, appears to day more than himſelf; the elegance of his perſon ſo richly adorned, and the firm compoſure he has now aſſumed, might make one hope that all was well within; did not the countenance ſo woe begone, too evidently betray how great the effort of put-on ſerenity. Sir John ſeems highly delighted; and old Fogworth in his white wig (as Mr. Hartley jocoſely deſcribed him,) and new ſuit of claret coloured cloaths, is haſtening the bride by me; ſhe has not yet appeared, having begged to breakfaſt in her own room, as ſhe was not ready to join the company when we aſſembled; I ſuppoſe ſhe intends to dazzle our eyes when ſhe does come down, ſhe is ſo long about it; her maid tells me, however, that her miſtreſs will be ready to attend me in a few minutes, for I am requeſted by Fogworth, not to return without her: here ſhe comes, for I hear her footſtep; think, oh think, Iſabinda, what a recital muſt mine be, when I reſume my pen. ——— ——— ———

I am at length at liberty to go on with my narration; oh! my friend, how wonderful are the ways of providence, how intricate our paths through human life! but I will not anticipate, but relate this day's events, as they fell out. I finiſhed with ſaying, I heard Miſs Fogworth coming; you may eaſily gueſs what was my ſurpriſe, when the door opened,

opened, and inſtead of the fine bride I expected, Mrs. Johnſon, (who you know is Lady Morgan's woman,) made her appearance in the greateſt confuſion imaginable. "I hope," ſaid ſhe, "Miſs Fenbrook will excuſe the liberty I take in breaking in upon her ſo abruptly; I am ſure you will think the occaſion will be a ſufficient apology; my dear madam, we are undone; what will my maſter ſay? the intended bride is gone, is flown we know not whither; what a ſtorm there will be below preſently; oh! that I ſhould have ever lived, to have ſeen this day." I begged her to ſit down, to be pacified, and relate the events ſhe knew, inſtead of expatiating on any thing elſe; I at laſt learned in a very incoherent manner, the following particulars: "the inſtant after I had ſpoke to Miſs Fogworth's maid, to haſten her miſtreſs, ſhe was ſeen to go out at a back door, which carries you into ſome fields, that lead to the high road; ſhe had her hat and cloak on, and ſeemed in great haſte: the groom that ſaw her, knowing that the carriages were then in waiting, at the front of the houſe, to convey the company to church, (which is about a mile off,) was greatly ſurprized at the ſight of the maid, ſhe had a bundle in her hand, and would not ſtop, though he called her ſeveral times; he ran directly into the kitchen, and told his tale; but as moſt of the ſervants were there aſſembled, the debate as to what meaſures were to be purſued was ſo long, that when he and one of the poſtillions were at laſt diſpatched, all they could perceive at all like her, was a woman at a very great diſtance, mounted behind a man on horſeback, who ſeemed travelling the way to London, at a round pace; as they were both on foot, they were obliged to return to the houſe; and it was agreed among them, that Johnſon ſhould immediately go in ſearch of the bride, and no further meaſures be purſued by them, without orders from Sir John: "I have been, madam," ſaid Johnſon, ſhedding tears as ſhe ſpoke,

"into

" into Miſs Fogworth's apartment; but ſhe is no where to be found.—I ſtaid to hear no more, but ran directly into her chamber, ſearched that, her dreſſing room and cloſets without effect; opened ſeveral of her drawers, found them quite empty; and upon my obſerving to Johnſon, that none of the trunks and boxes were viſible, which arrived the day before: was told, that ſhe had deſired they might be put into a little back parlour, go and ſhe would ſend her maid for the particular things ſhe wanted in the morning, for ſhe hated litter, and they would only croud her room:" "I am afraid, madam, ſaid John, upon enquiry, we ſhall find thoſe things alſo miſſing; for I now recollect while the company were buſy laſt night in the parlour, I ſaw Miſs Fogworth's maid two or three times, come out of that, where the trunks and boxes were put; and after it was quite dark, when all was confuſion, owing to my poor young maſter's illneſs; John the under footman and ſhe, were in there for a great length of time: I wanted John, when ſupper was to go in, and tried to open the door, but it was locked; I called ſeveral times, but no body anſwered; and as I knew they kept company together, did ſuppoſe as the windows are ſo low, the fooliſh maid had gone out that way, to croſs the lawn and take a walk in the fields with her ſweetheart; he was not aſked for at ſupper time, and you know, madam, it was no buſineſs of mine, I had no right to diſturb the lovers; but I am very certain John is privy to the elopement, particularly ſo, if the things which were put in the little parlour are not to be found. The footboy that came with Mr. Fogworth is moſt likely alſo an accomplice, as he was not viſible after it was dark, and upon my enquiry after him laſt night, John told me he was tired and gone to bed." The true ſtate of things was now my Iſabinda, evident; but though overjoyed at Mr. Morgan's eſcape from the matrimonial nooſe, I was all in a tremor at the thoughts of the dreadful diſ-

turbance

turbance which muſt happen, when Sir John and old Fogworth were informed of what had paſſed: I deſired, however, Johnſon to follow me down; we went firſt into the little back parlour, but found nothing in it but the uſual furniture; every trunk and even band-box, were removed from thence. I then took her with me into the breakfaſt room, but found nobody there but Lady Morgan and Letitia; I retreated again immediately, and from one of the windows in the hall perceived all the gentlemen at a little diſtance; I had indeed wondered at the patience of the two fathers, but found out afterwards, that Major Waltham had contrived by ſome ſtratagem, to draw them into the garden, in order to get his friend as long a reprieve as poſſible; and they were returning to the houſe when I ſaw them: I opened the hall door and deſired to ſpeak to Mr. Fogworth: Sir John ſurveyed me with a look of apprehenſive curioſity; but the old man with great gaiety approaching me directly, cried out: "why, there it is now, Doll is baſhful I ſuppoſe, wants father to clear her up; never mind, my boy," looking at George as he walked on, "ſhall have her for all this; ſhall ſee preſently how the maiden's bluſh becomes her." Saying this, he entered, and ſeeing me turn towards the dining parlour, followed me there; I ſhut the door directly, and turning the key, informed him in the beſt manner I could of what had happened; he at firſt would not believe it, ſwore it was a lye, a curſed lye, and done only to plague him; in ſhort he was at laſt ſo rude that he put me out of all patience; and unlocking the door I threw it open, and told him with a degree of quickneſs, that I was ſorry for it afterwards, that he had better walk up ſtairs and convince himſelf, whether what I had ſaid was true or falſe. Our altercation had by this time brought Sir John, and the reſt of the gentlemen to the door; Fogworth took hold of my uncle's arm as he paſſed him. "This girl," ſaid he, "has been telling me a

ſtrange ſtory, my friend, come with me; we will ſearch above, and ſee whether we ſhall not be able to find the loſt ſheep ſhe talks of." Sir John made no anſwer, but with an anxious look, and I dare ſay beating heart, followed him directly. I juſt ſtaid to acquaint the Major and Mr. Morgan; that his intended bride was eloped; but I did not know with whom; and ran up ſtairs after them, beckoning to Johnſon to follow. They had by the time we got up, ſearched not only her apartment, but all the contiguous rooms: and we found them in the gallery running about in a frantic condition, reproaching each other with their want of care. Fogworth the next inſtant crying out, that he would kill Doll if he could get at her; and Sir John betwixt whiles ſaying, he was undone. We at laſt by entreaties, got them into Miſs Fogworth's room again, where after ſearching ſome time, I at laſt diſcovered a paper lying behind the looking glaſs, and haſtily taking it up, perceived it was directed to Mr. Fogworth. I gave it him, but the poor man's hand ſhook ſo, he could not open it, and deſired me to read it to him, which I did: the contents were as follow: "Dear papa, before this reaches you we ſhall be many miles aſunder; I cannot ſay I had any great liking to the huſband you choſe for me, therefore thought it beſt to pleaſe myſelf: I hope long before you read this, to be united to my dear Jacob Lightfoot, who has loved me for ſome time paſt, with the moſt ardent affection: you may be aſſured nothing on our part ſhall be wanting, to make you happy; who am your dutiful daughter, Dorothy Fogworth, at this time of writing—I have taken away all my things, and the wedding preſents you was ſo good to bring me".—Imagine if you can, Iſabinda, the rage the old man was in at this letter; every low epithet that can be thought of, was plentifully beſtowed on her: "a poor mean huſſy," he ſaid, "to marry a packer, when ſhe might in time have been a baronet's lady:" he then roſe up, hobbled down

down ſtairs as faſt as he could, ordered his poſt chaiſe or chariot, (for it ſerves in both capacities,) to the door; and ſending for Johnſon, deſired her to put up every thing belonging to him and his daughter, that ſhe might have left behind; and without taking leave of Sir John, who ſat motionleſs in the ſame chair all the time, (or any body elſe,) drove off as ſoon as the things were ready, and the lawyer with him. I thought it now time to rouſe my uncle, but found it a very difficult matter; aſtoniſhment and chagrin had taken ſtrong hold on him: when thoroughly awakened from what he muſt have looked upon as a dream, he was as abject as he had before been haughty; and was crying, like a child, and again, ſaying, he was undone, when Major Waltham entered the room, and reminding Sir John, that the clock had ſtruck eleven; ſwore with ſome ſpirit that his wedding ſhould not be put off, and that unleſs they ſet out directly, the canonical hour would be paſt; this brought Sir John out of his trance; he begged the Major to make uſe of his carriage; entreated him to excuſe his accompanying him, ſaid with a ſigh, that he was very ſure his ſon would gladly ſupply his place, and give his ſiſter away; and whoever elſe choſe it would attend them to church: you may be aſſured I was one of the party. Lady Morgan and Varniſh ſtayed at home, to comfort my uncle in the beſt manner they could; and Letitia, the Major, the now elated George Morgan, and myſelf, ſtepped into Sir John's coach: reached the village, where the parſon and his daughter, pretty miſs Ackworth, had been expecting us ſome time, drove to church, Letitia and the Major were happily united; and returned to Morgan-hall, the doctor and his daughter ſoon following us, to ſpend a few days. On our return home,—we found Sir John walking about the parlour, (where Lady Morgan and Varniſh were ſeated,) gloomy and diſcontented; the ſight of Mrs. Waltham ſeemed

for a few minutes to alleviate his uneaſineſs, but he ſoon relapſed again: I found by what he let drop, that the under footman had been examined during our abſence, as Johnſon's requeſt; who had detained him on purpoſe, and ſent Sir John's footman and Lady Morgan's with us: curious to know the particulars, I went to her the inſtant I was at liberty; ſhe told me the man had made a full confeſſion of the whole affair, upon my uncle's promiſing to pardon him if he did. It ſeems Mr. Lightfoot had correſponded with the fair lady from the firſt of her coming here, and had bribed Jenny, her maid, who carefully, I dare ſay, conveyed his letters to her lady, which were always directed to herſelf; the laſt Miſs Fogworth received was ſent by the footboy her father brought with him; no wonder ſhe was in ſuch a hurry to leave the room after his arrival. Lightfoot requeſts her in it, to go off with him the next morning; tells her that he will be ſomewhere near Morgan-hall in a poſt chaiſe and four before day-break, and deſires her to order the footboy to acquaint him, which is the propereſt place to receive her, as he is totally ignorant of the ſpot. It ſeems he came the night before, found means during the confuſion, to ſpeak to her maid. and helped to convey the little things out of the little parlour, into the cart they had hired by Miſs Fogworth's order, for that purpoſe; which ſet off with them directly; and about a quarter of an hour before the morning dawned, received the ſtill more valuable treaſure, and took the road towards London. Jenny had, very dextrouſly, the evening before, carried down her miſtreſs's things in bundles, which occaſioned Johnſon's ſo often meeting her coming out of the back parlour; and in the morning made her eſcape, in the manner before related, having orders to prevent a diſcovery as long as ſhe could, as they purpoſed being married on their way, Lightfoot having procured a ſpecial licence: this is as far as we can trace the affair. I muſt

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own I ſhall not be quite ſatisfied till we hear more. Miſerable would it be now, indeed, for poor Mr. Morgan, ſhould any thing happen to prevent their union. When Doctor Ackworth and his daughter came, Sir John went into his library, and gave orders to Williams to bring the Doctor there: they were together for upwards of two hours. Lady Morgan was ſo much fatigued with riſing ſo long before her uſual time, that ſhe retired into her dreſſing room, flung herſelf on the ſofa, and went faſt aſleep: the young ones of the party were therefore left together, and ſpent a very agreeable afternoon. About an hour before dinner my uncle and his companion appeared: Sir John's countenance much more ſerene than before their interview. The Doctor, Iſabinda, is one of the beſt men living. I learnt afterwards he had taken an effectual method to calm Sir John; having told him that as the diſappointment was on Fogworth's part, no diſadvantage could fall out to him. My uncle replied, there were ſome agreements he was fearful the old man would not fulfil. (I ſuppoſe to lend him money to diſcharge the debts of Lord Daffodil and Sir Harry Sanderſon; the latter, I hear, is very importunate). Doctor Ackworth gueſſed it was ſome debt of honor he had undertaken to pay, and made anſwer, that though it was not to be ſuppoſed he would fulfil the whole, yet he thought as Miſs Fogworth had acted ſo baſely, Sir John could manage ſo, as to get a part; and then apologizing for the liberty he took, expatiated on the dangerous practice of gaming; which he told me my uncle took in good part; but he is ſo artful, there is no ſuch thing as knowing what to make of him. It was agreed betwixt them, that Mr. Morgan ſhould go to town to-morrow, with a letter from his father, to demand the fulfilling of the agreement; he would have gone himſelf, but, poor man, he is ſo involved that London would be a very dangerous place for him at preſent. George has this morning

made me his confidante: there is a friend of Euphrasia's, who resides in town, and the very great pleasure he shewed at the proposal Sir John made to him to go, convinces me, he wishes to acquaint her with the happy conclusion of his match.——

A profound calm followed the storm.—All was good humour and mirth for the succeeding part of the day. Mr. Ansted, the Major's uncle, came to dinner; was to have been here yesterday, but was prevented (very luckily for Sir John) by particular business; he therefore was told of the young lady's escape, but nothing more; his nephew thinking it advisable to hide my uncle's anxiety from him. Lady Morgan came down on his arrival, perfectly recruited: I really believe she suffered for her son, but did not dare to shew her concern; and is heartily glad in her own mind the match is broke off. As to Sir John, you know, my dear, he is a perfect camelion, and therefore put on his best colours before Mr. Ansted. As George Morgan does not set out till after breakfast to-morrow, I would not close my letter till I had acquainted you with every particular. It is so large a packet that I shall desire him to send it by our private conveyance.

LETTER XLIX.

LEONORA TO ISABINDA.

As you must, necessarily, my beloved friend, be under some anxiety as to what passes at Morgan hall at present, I write again as soon as possible, to give the finishing stroke to the events which

which have lately paſſed here. Mr. Morgan is returned; how different a man from what he was a few days ago, is hardly to be deſcribed: he has almoſt recovered his looks already. You ſhall have the account of that part of his journey relating to old Fogworth, in his own words: "When I arrived in town," ſaid he, "I went directly to Philpot-lane; I knew my father was uneaſy; I therefore left every tranſaction relating to myſelf (though intereſting), unfiniſhed, till I had ſettled things with Fogworth. I found the old man in his counting houſe; he deſired me to go up ſtairs into the back room, and very ſoon joined me there: he looked more chearful than I expected; told me he was ſorry for the trick his daughter played me, but believed, by what he had obſerved, it would not break my heart. I endeavoured to put on a face of care, but my countenance, as you well know, Leonora, is the index of my mind; it is an honeſt one, and never conceals what paſſes in my heart; I therefore ſucceeded but ill in the attempt I am ſure." He went on however, "To be ſure, Doll has done wrong, but ſhe is my daughter for all that; when I arrived here, I found both her and Lightfoot; ſhe knelt down to me, whimpered a little, ſaid ſhe was married, and hoped I would forgive her. By my ſoul I could not withſtand her! but kiſſed and made friends directly. I would not turn her out on her wedding day, that would not have been kind, you know; particularly ſo as all her things arrived here before her; and ſhe would not have known what to have done with them laſt night; and I know not how the little jade has managed it, but I have this morning conſented to let them live with me. I ſhould be very dull without Dolly; that I ſhould;" wiping his eyes as he ſpoke; then turning to me, "She is above ſtairs, ſhalt ſee her if you will, boy;" and was going to call her down. I begged him not to troble himſelf:

ſelf: ſaid it would be by no means proper after what had paſſed; that I was in haſte; and only came to tranſact ſome buſineſs with him on my father's account; and taking his letter out of my pocket, bowing low, gave it to him: Fogworth's countenance fell upon receiving it; but Sir John is ſuch a man, my dear couſin, he has ſuch winning ways when he has a mind to it, he can do any thing. "Had he uſed ſoftneſs with me," ſighing while he ſpoke, "I am very certain things would not have turned out ſo well as they have done; I have reaſon to bleſs God he did not." But to go on with my ſtory, the old man's countenance brightened upon reading the contents: "Why, there it is now!" ſaid he; "this is to have to do with people in high life! your father takes it as he ſhould do, boy; I cannot ſay, that as the marriage did not take place, I think myſelf obliged to fulfil the whole of the agreement; but as I well know how matters ſtand with Sir John, I believe I can make him eaſy for the preſent: but he ſhould not ſhake his elbows, my boy; he had a fine fortune once, but he ſhould not game, Mr. Morgan." Saying this, he ſat down to a table, and wrote to my father in the following manner; for the letter is ſo conciſe, that I can remember every word he read to me.——"Sir John, I cannot help my daughter's faults, and have forgiven her; as to what you deſire of me in your letter, that is another affair: I do not think myſelf bound down to my promiſe; it was not my fault you know, that the match did not take place; but you have behaved like a gentleman in the affair; I know where the ſhoe pinches: Lord Daffodil does not want his money at preſent, but Sir Harry does. I'll tell you what, I will advance the ſum due to the latter, at ſame intereſt as uſual, and that I am ſure is as much as you can expect. Any time within the fortnight that Sir Harry Sanderſon calls on me, I will diſcharge the note he has of yours,

and

and place it to your account; you ſhould not gamble, friend, indeed you ſhould not gamble, Sir John. Your ſervant,

J. FOGWORTH."

As ſoon as he had directed and ſealed it, he gave me a hearty ſhake of the hand; wiſhed me ſucceſs in the world; and telling me he was wanted ſadly below, went down ſtairs directly, I following him; heartily glad when I had ſhut the ſtreet-door after me."—In this manner, my Iſabinda, has ended this moſt uncomfortable affair. Peace and joy at preſent reign in their full force at Morgan hall: even Sir John ſeems much happier than he has been for ſome months paſt: though I am very certain this calm cannot laſt, I, as well as the reſt, am determined to enjoy it. Our wedding gueſts leave us to-morrow, that is, the doctor and his daughter, and Mr. Anſted; Major and Mrs. Waltham, and Varniſh, are to remain here the reſt of the ſummer, or rather to ſay, autumn. I hope no new occurrences will ſpeedily ariſe to require my pen; I ſhall therefore expect your fingers will be employed in return for the very prodigal uſe of mine. Remember me to all friends at Bellefield. Adieu, my love, and believe me yours as ſincerely as ever.

LETTER L.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

I HAVE received your packet, and likewiſe the letter following it. Thank you, my dear friend, for the trouble you have taken. I congratulate

you my love, we all congratulate you, in the ſincereſt manner, on the proſperous concluſion of the affair; how happy has the recital made us. Our ſincere good wiſhes attend the Major and Mrs. Waltham; and may your amiable, your worthy couſin, Mr. Morgan, meet with the ſucceſs he deſerves in future, with the lady he is devoted to. We are all of opinion, notwithſtanding what you ſay of Mrs. Lightfoot's coquetry, they will be a very happy couple. Bred up in the city, ſhe will now ſhine in her proper ſphere; when ſhe endeavoured to emerge from thence, ſhe was blinded by the dazzling light which ſurrounded her; returning, ſhe will be herſelf again, and will, in time, make both a proper wife and mother to the object of her choice and her children. You deſire no more melancholy epiſtles from me; indeed, my Leonora, I am not diſpoſed to ſend you any: I have entirely recovered my peace of mind, and wonted chearfulneſs, without having recourſe to medicine; I am apt now and then to exert myſelf too much: who indeed can do otherwiſe, when ſurrounded by friends and well wiſhers? What will you ſay to Charles Aſhton, in the character of Benedict, the married man? I aſſure you ſuch a ſcheme is on foot, though he is at preſent entirely ignorant of it. My aunt and Lucerne are the projectors, and your friend, Iſabinda admitted to the conferences; though my dear mother is an utter ſtranger at preſent in the affair. You have often ſeen Miſs Arnel at our houſe; Lucerne tells us he is very certain, ſhe has long looked upon my brother with a favourable eye, and Sir James and my lady have ever been fond of him: She will have a great fortune, which is, I am ſorry to ſay it, a prodigious attraction to Charles, (a fault very common to moſt men,) her perſon to be ſure, is by no means bewitching, but ſhe cannot be called by any body diſagreeable, and I think I may ſay,

worth

worth and merit ſhows itſelf in every action. Methinks I hear you cry, a very proper character to reclaim your brother, my dear; indeed, Leonora, Charles is very good by nature; I will admit he is too eaſily led aſtray, but alas, which of us all can withſtand the force of bad example, particularly where ſtrong temptations attend it? My brother I am convinced has ſeen his error, and I do not in the leaſt doubt, if we can unite him to an amiable woman, that he will make the beſt of huſbands, and turn out the worthieſt of men; he dances with her in all our little parties of that ſort, and ſeems pleaſed to do ſo; but he is of ſo volatile a diſpoſition, that it is impoſſible at preſent to form even a conjecture, whether our ſcheme is likely to ſucceed or not. — —

The family at Springwood Caſtle are at laſt arrived there; it conſiſts of Lord and Lady Portſdown, Lady Anne Sydney their daughter, Lady Louiſa Werter, the deſtined bride of Lord Seagrave, their eldeſt ſon; Colonel Sydney, youngeſt ſon to the Earl, and Sir Thomas Witrol, an admirer of Lady Anne's: Lord Seagrave is expected down in about a fortnight. The earl and his lady are both of very ancient nobility, of which we are told they are not a little proud, in every other reſpect they are ſaid to be the beſt of people: Lady Anne Sydney is a young lady of a moſt amiable diſpoſition; but oh! Leonora, how I long for a ſight of Lady Louiſa Werter; my brother has often ſeen her, and ſays ſhe is eſteemed one of the greateſt beauties of the times; but arrogant, conceited, and exceedingly vain of her perſonal attractions, it is thought ſhe has not been able to reach Lord Seagrave's heart, and he only marries her for the very large fortune ſhe will be miſtreſs of: "For my part," continued Charles, "by what I underſtand, there is not the leaſt likelihood of any happineſs in their union; his lordſhip is not perſonally known to me, but

his

his character is by no means that of a ſober man." Here Lucerne who was preſent, gave my brother an intelligent look, who a little confuſed, went on as follows: "Handſome as ſhe is, he will marry her with indifference; and as her looking glaſs tells her, whenever ſhe views herſelf in it, that ſhe is an angel, it will likewiſe ſuggeſt to her, as ſhe is of a very gay turn, that ſhe has always the means of retaliation for the neglect, he will moſt likely very ſhortly ſhew her: it ſurpriſes every body that Lord and Lady Portſdown, who are very ſenſible people, ſhould be ſo earneſt for the match; for it is ſaid the Earl in particular is ſo attached to her, that ſhould any thing happen to prevent it, it would make him miſerable. I had theſe particulars from Sir Thomas Wittol, with whom I am acquainted, they are circumſtances which he has heard, but did not deliver them as a certainty, for though he is ſo intimate in the family, and is in hopes from his immenſe fortune, to be one day or other a member of it, they are very reſerved to him in all their affairs: I have likewiſe," concluded my brother, "a ſlight knowledge of Colonel Sydney, having been in his company two or three times: but I diſlike him much, and for no other reaſon that I know of, but our diſpoſitions being ſo very different, as he is of a ſerious turn, and ſo difficult of acceſs that a take off of the hat is all that ever paſſes betwixt us." Here Charles ended, and my mother, who had been all attention during his little recital, replied, "I am extremely glad to hear, ſon, your acquaintance with our noble neighbours is ſo ſmall, and if you indulge my wiſh, it will be never to increaſe it, at leaſt while you remain with us." My aunt ſmiled, Lucerne's countenance brightened, and your friend remained ſilent, while my brother with a look of aſtoniſhment, anſwered her thus: "I ſhould be very ſorry, madam, not to indulge every deſire ſo excellent

lent a mother can form, but excuſe me if I ſay, this prohibition appears to me very extraordinary; it will, however, be eaſily accompliſhed as to the Portſdown family; but what can I do with Sir Thomas; faith it will appear a little odd not to know the man, when I meet him in a field, with whom I have ſo often ſauntered arm in arm, for hours in St. James's Park." "But you need not at leaſt ſeek his acquaintance, my dear Charles:" "Why look ye, madam," replied my brother, with one of his gay airs, "I will comply with your wiſh, particular as it is, as far as poſſible, but upon my ſoul, if the Baronet flies to me with open arms, which probably will be the caſe, I cannot put him off, with—Sir, I have not the honour of being acquainted with you." "Neither do I deſire you ſhould, ſon," replied my mother; "I am far from wiſhing any body to be guilty of rudeneſs, in compliance with a requeſt of mine; but you can avoid the path that leads towards Springwood Caſtle, and I muſt truſt to heaven for the reſt;" and ſhe ſaid it in a very ſolemn manner. My brother roſe, and taking her hand, preſſed it to his lips very gracefully; "I cannot," ſaid he, "my dear madam (looking on her with a ſmiling countenance) for the life of me find out, what heaven has to do in this affair; but your commands ſhall be obeyed, that is as far as it is in my power; though I preſume you do not wiſh me to ſhut myſelf up in my own chamber, for fear a very worthy man of my acquaintance, ſhould find me out." "I do not like nobility, Charles, and I ſtill leſs like the account you have yourſelf given of ſome of the family; I, therefore, hope you will keep to the promiſe you have made me, I wiſh not to make you a recluſe, my deſire is only to turn your ſteps another way." This little altercation being ended, we paſſed the reſt of the evening in our uſual delightful manner. My mother is, however, at times, very thoughtful;

thoughtful; ſhe has (as I informed you a great while ago was her determination,), taken the key of the draw-bridge, at which our ſervants murmur much, having now a great way to go round upon every errand to the village. My aunt and Charles laughed heartily; but Lucerne gave her a look of the greateſt approbation while the ſervant was locking up the padlock. What has ſhe to fear, Leonora? Lord Seagrave engaged, and likewiſe the baronet, there is nothing to be apprehended from them; and the character of the reſerved Sydney admits not even of a ſhadow of the leaſt doubt of him: but perhaps it is my brother ſhe is afraid of. One would almoſt think, if that is the caſe, ſhe has been acquainted with his late frolics at Richmond: Yes, it muſt be that. Vain fool as I was to think, had the family not been ſituated as they are, that men, uſed to the politeſt circles in town, ſhould ever turn a thought on a little country girl, poſſeſſed of no charms but youth and innocence. She is in the right, my Leonora, deareſt of women, ſhe is ever ſo. Charles might, perhaps, if introduced to the family, take to his bottle again; he tells us Lord Seagrave is not only a very gay man with regard to women, but drinks deep. Should my brother relapſe into any of his follies here, it would be dreadful indeed. But how can that be the caſe? In Lord Portſdown's houſe it would be impoſſible for them to purſue their ſcenes of revelry; the Earl would ſoon be diſguſted at the late hours thoſe ſcenes ever occaſion, and would ſhortly put an end to them. I wonder whether the grave Colonel Sydney accompanies his brother in his riotous parties? Wolves, you know, my dear, often put on ſheep's cloathing. Though I think Charles ſays, he has a very great character, and is reckoned the oppoſite to Lord Seagrave in every thing. Adieu, my friend.

LETTER

LETTER LI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

WELL, Leonora, my dear mother need not have been ſo very anxious in regard to her children; a fortnight has paſſed, and we have not ſo much as had the leaſt glimpſe of any of our quality neighbours; I ſuppoſe they do not mean ever to make their appearance at our church,—as the little chapel in the caſtle we are told is to be graced with them every Sunday, Lord Portſdown's own chaplain, performing the ſervice, juſt as they like; I am ſure however had they honoured us ſo far, they would have found no deſpicable congregation; as numbers of the beſt families round us, are now attracted to Springwood every ſabbath, by the fine delivery, and excellent ſermons preached by the worthy Lucerne. Lord Seagrave arrived laſt night; a univerſal commotion was raiſed in our little village, the bells were again ſet a ringing, and a great quantity of beer was again beſtowed on the poor, by his lordſhip's own orders, he is however bountiful, my friend, with all his faults: without ſeeing them, I can venture to pronounce, that I ſhould be much more partial to him than his brother; many are the vices attributed not without reaſon to a lively genius; the fire and ſpirit that uſually attends a young man of ſix and twenty, will ſometimes hurry him to exceſſes, which in his ſober hours he is ſorry for; but his gloomy brother (according to Charles's deſcription,) who is one year younger, is unnatural to a degree; a mere book worm, at ſo early a period, muſt in a courſe of years degenerate into ſtupidity and moroſeneſs. You laugh perhaps at this little ſally, and think I ſhall be more able to form an opinion of them, when chance has brought them

them to my view. My mother is infinitely better pleaſed with our neighbours than ſhe expected to be, and finding in the firſt week after their arrival, they were not likely to in the leaſt annoy us, has taken off the prohibition from my brother, who now ranges where he pleaſes, without the leaſt fear of meeting Sir Thomas, who is wholly taken up in accompanying the noble party about their extenſive grounds. Your Iſabinda is likewiſe permitted to take excurſions with Charles in his phaeton, on horſeback, or walking parties, moſt of theſe fine evenings, ſo frequent at this time of the year. Lucerne and my brother are to be engaged all day to-morrow in a fiſhing party at Sir James Arnel's; as there are no ladies aſked that day, and my aunt and mother ſpend the afternoon with old Lady Balſton, whoſe ſon, Sir William, is engaged to the Arnel's; we (that is Caroline and I,) have agreed to join the Miſs Welſted's in a ramble that evening; they are to drink tea with me at an early hour, that we may have the longer time to walk. Dear curioſity, aſſiſt thy votaries and indulge us with a ſight of at leaſt ſome of the caſtle inhabitants. I muſt break off. — — — —

My brother informed me when I went down, he had had a tranſient view of Lady Louiſa Werter, and Lord Seagrave,—(he ſuppoſes;) he bowed to her ladyſhip, who returned the compliment in a very polite manner; they were on horſeback; he ſays, Lord Seagrave, as far as he can judge by the little he ſaw of him, is remarkably handſome; but as Charles was in his phaeton, and they were turning down one of the green lanes towards Swainford, he could not give a particular deſcription of him: ſhe deſired me not to mention any thing of it, as the higher powers might, perhaps if I did, again diveſt us of the privilege of ſtirring out; the ſame rattling creature as ever, you find, my Leonora. Lucerne and he ſet out this morning for their fiſhing party; my aunt and mother are gone to their afternoon

ternoon viſit: and I am every minute in expectation of my young friends;—a ring at the gate informs me this inſtant of their arrival: ſhould any occurrences happen this evening more than common, I will acquaint you with them on my return.—

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I reſume my pen, beloved of my heart: but it is to you I ſincerely repent our laſt night's walk: in ſhort, my dear, we were frighted out of our wits; I dare not acquaint my aunt and mother with the particulars; and, as I well know, Charles's fiery diſpoſition, muſt likewiſe keep it an entire ſecret from him: but we were treated rudely indeed, and by the very man, whoſe character I had ſo lately, ſo ignorantly (I am ſure) been defending. You will, I make no doubt, be ſurpriſed, but I will haſten to the recital: we agreed on our firſt ſetting out to take our courſe towards Shepperton; we had paſſed our village, and were got almoſt to the top of the lane, which as you well know, terminates the extent of the park belonging to the caſtle; when we heard a man's voice on the other ſide of the pales. I inſtantly took the alarm, and was for returning home directly, which Nancy Welſted would by no means agree to; "you do not conſider, my dear," whiſpered ſhe, "that as by the ſound of the voice, we ſhall preſently meet this party, there can be no danger in our proceeding on; the paling and hedge are ſo high and thick, it is impoſſible for them to have the leaſt glimpſe of us; we muſt paſs them as ſilent as poſſible, and ſhall very ſoon turn entirely another way; but if we go back, they muſt of courſe follow us a conſiderable time, and ſhould they be going to Springwood, we muſt inevitably meet at the ſtile, or in the field, which is our path way to the village." Trembling and pale with fear, we all complied with her advice, not a word did we ſpeak, we hardly breathed, and our uneaſineſs was greatly encreaſed, as you may imagine, when upon a nearer approach we heard theſe

words,

words, "Go back again! no, faith, not I; upon my ſoul, Jack, I am tired to death already, though we came but the night before laſt;" (here he made uſe of a dreadful oath,) "it was enough to make one ſick for a twelvemonth, wandering about theſe forlorn grounds as we did yeſterday evening, with papa and mama, ſiſter and brother, that prig, Sir Thomas; and worſt of all, the woman I deteſt as much as if ſhe was my wife already." "But my lord," replied another voice, "what will they think of your abſence? better to return indeed." "I'll be d————d if I do," replied the firſt, "I care not what they think; no, let Frederic, whoſe every word they hang on, amuſe them with his wife remarks on the delightful exotics, with which they are ſurrounded, I am for nobler ſport; give me the girl that is fair and young, that's all the botany I deſire to be ſkilled in—the ſparkling glaſs, the lovely laſs—and my brother and his rhetoric may go to the devil for me." "Indeed, Lord Seagrave you are to blame," returned the other. "I'll tell you what," replied the firſt, "I brought you with me, Saunders, for my amuſement in this doleful place, not my tormentor; therefore I expect you without further remonſtrances, to attend me to the village, I want to ſee what ſtuff the country laſſes here are made of; by G— a man might as well live in the deſerts of Arabia, as among theſe tall waving pines, theſe ſhady elms, cooped up within theſe pales, like the deer which ſurrounds us. Yonder gate we ſee at a diſtance, will lead us to the ſtile, Du Chaux, my valet, tells me carries us to the village; come on then you dog, or I'll be curſed if I don't cane you." At which the other ſet up a loud laugh, whiſtling and ſinging till they were out of our hearing. We then made what haſte we could, and ſoon turned from the lane; when we found ourſelves entirely out of danger, we ſtood ſtill to conſult what we ſhould do; and agreed it would be better for us to return by Marſton Vale, than to proceed to Shepperton, as in that

that caſe we muſt have been obliged to traverſe the lane back again, we had juſt left, in our way home. I propoſed calling at Sir Philip Beverley's, and begging my lady's aſſiſtance, either with their carriage or attendance to Bellefield; which was agreed to. Think, Leonora, what was our concern when we came, to find the houſe entirely uninhabited, but by one female. The ladies it ſeems were gone to Lady Balſton's, and the ſervants had taken the opportunity both men and maids, to follow their maſters to Sir James Arnel's, in hopes of having a diſtant view of the ſport. What could we do, we were now in the greateſt diſtreſs that was poſſible; I was for ſtaying where we were; till ſome of them came back; but was again over-ruled, Caroline inſiſting upon our returning directly, to prevent the uneaſineſs we ſhould occaſion to our reſpective families, if not at home by the time it was dark. We again ſet out, and comforted ourſelves with the thought of being much leſs likely to meet them, at the front of the Caſtle than the back part of it, as we concluded them ſtill at their paſtimes in the village; which you know lies behind it. We croſſed the meadow, and were congratulating each other that a very ſhort lane, would bring us to Bellefield avenue; when juſt as we had paſſed the iron gates leading to the Caſtle, we perceived two gentlemen at a little diſtance before us; they were ſtanding ſtill with their backs towards us, one of them negligently leaning on a poſt before the door which carries you to the ſtable yard. We were greatly ſhocked when the ſame voice, which had before ſo much alarmed us, without altering his poſition cried out, "why, ay to be ſure, Jack, Dido is a fine creature, and has won no leſs than three plates already; I would ſooner part with all my London ſtud, than her, upon my ſalvation; but faith, in my preſent humour (dearly as I love her,) could I meet with a fine girl, ſhe might go to hell if neceſſary for ſuch a purchaſe for me: Why blood and the devil,

are

are there no females in this country; not even a dairy maid have we met, all over the village this evening. But come, Saunders, ſhall we go in, I ſuppoſe by this time there's a hue and cry after us." Saying this, he turned directly towards us; we were then but a few paces from them, and endeavouring to hide our faces as much as we could, tried with beating hearts to paſs them in ſilence: they immediately perceived us, and ſtood ſtill as we paſſed, viewing us as we could find with great attention; unhappily for me, I ſtruck Lord Seagrave's fancy, "Genteel girls all of them, upon my ſoul," ſaid he, "and elegant as if they had been bred in the precincts of St. James's; but by G— I never ſaw ſo bewitching a creature as her in the chip hat and pink ribbons, in all my days. What a complexion, what eyes are there, and ſuch a ſhape into the bargain, faith, one would take her for ſome celeſtial being, if the clear white and red which inhabits her lovely face, did not convince us ſhe is real fleſh and blood; but be ſhe what ſhe may, I am determined Jack to taſte the ſweets of thoſe cherry lips." We were by this time got into the little lane at the bottom of our avenue, and quickened our pace as much as poſſible in order to get rid of them. "For heaven's ſake, my Lord," ſaid Saunders, "do not think of ſuch a thing; theſe young ladies by their appearance are certainly ſome of the people of faſhion, belonging to theſe parts; you cannot tell what ſcrape you may bring yourſelf into, ſhould you inſult them." "Inſult them Jack, no faith, I think a civil ſalute upon a firſt acquaintance, cannot be called an inſult; I ſhall, however, venture notwithſtanding your wiſe remonſtrances." Saying this they followed us; and walking very faſt, were up with us in a minute, and entirely hindered our going on; when Lord Seagrave ſtaring me full in the face, "And ſo, my charmer," cried he, "you really thought that light trip of your's, would be an equal match for the haſty ſtrides of a man

man near ſix feet high; but you are miſtaken, and muſt pay the forfeit due to your perverſeneſs." Saying this, he without further ceremony took me round the neck, and kiſſed me ſeveral times, before I could diſengage myſelf from him. I ſcreamed as well as my companions, who came in for their ſhare of the brutality, both from him and his friend, when attaching himſelf entirely to me, Lord Seagrave addreſſed me in ſuch a ſtrain of froth and nonſenſe, as could hardly paſs with a girl of twelve years old. "This rudeneſs, my Lord," at laſt, ſaid I, "is not to be borne. You and your friend Mr. Saunders, for we well know who you are; may be aſhamed of yourſelves for treating any body in the manner you have done us; we are every one of us people of ſome condition, and you may aſſure yourſelves you ſhall both ſuffer for it." Not in the leaſt diſconcerted, the odious man again attempted to ſalute me; when ſetting up a loud cry, in which I was alſo joined by my companions, providence brought four countrymen to our aſſiſtance; who happened to be returning through the lane, to Marſton Vale: they immediately ran to us, and while three of them ſecured my Lord and his companion, the other at our earneſt requeſt, conducted us ſafe to Bellefield; and having handſomely rewarded him, he ſet out directly in queſt of his companions; ſwearing he would make them join with him in drubbing the gentlemen confoundedly, for the uſage we had met with; which we afterwards heard they did. After we had ſat ſome time, and recruited our ſpirits, we took a little refreſhment, and were pretty well recovered of our fright, when my mother returned; who ſent the Welſteds and Caroline home in the carriage; and ſo ended this moſt uncomfortable adventure. Adieu my Leonora, I am ſure you pity us all.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

You aſk me, my friend, a deſcription of Lord Seagrave's perſon; wretch as he is! I can hardly bear the name of him: but as you ſeem deſirous of a further account, I will indulge your wiſh; for notwithſtanding the fright I was in, I had ſufficient leiſure to examine him thoroughly, having been obliged, ſorely againſt my will, to be ſo long in his company.—Lord Seagrave then, is very tall, and large in proportion, without being in the leaſt fat; well made, but rather round-ſhouldered than otherwiſe; he has light hair, a fine fair complexion, large light eyes, full of ſweetneſs; his features regular, but rather a turn up in his chin, which renders that part of his face not quite ſo complete: he muſt, however, be ſaid to be an extreme handſome man; and were his mental qualifications equal to his perſonal ones, he would indeed be an honour to the rank he is in; but alas! they are totally different; not a day paſſes without our receiving ſome new account of his profligacy. Our adventure with him, has however, no further tranſpired, than the revenge taken on them by the four countrymen, who were deſired by him that ſaw us home at our requeſt, not to mention any thing of ladies being concerned in the affair: and his lordſhip and his companion, I ſuppoſe, did not wiſh to divulge the ſecret; and they were found by two of their poſtillions, lying in the lane, in a miſerable beaten condition, and carried home by them; nothing further is known of it in the family than what their bruiſes informed them of. I think, notwithſtanding, the people in our village are uſed

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to ſmart folks, (as there are numbers of the neighbourhood that frequently walk or ride through it; and Charles is often in his regimentals, they muſt have been greatly ſurprized at the ſight of Lord Seagrave, who was dreſſed in a pale green coat, with a narrow trail of ſilver tambour, in a running pattern, round it; pale pink corded ſilk waiſtcoat, worked with ſilver, in the ſame pattern as the coat; a very fine work'd muſlin handkerchief round his throat; and narrow lace ruffles and frill: ſuch a beau as I have deſcribed, muſt (in thoſe former times I have heard the good Lady Balſton ſpeak of), have raiſed quite an uproar an hundred miles from the metropolis; but modern politeneſs now extends itſelf every where; I dare ſay, they therefore only gave him a look of admiration, and let him paſs.———

Good heavens! my dear Leonora, there is no bearing the perſecutions of this Lord Seagrave. I heartily join my worthy mother in her wiſh, that the Portſdown family had never come here at all; but I will give you the particulars, and you will then judge if I have not reaſon to be chagrined: two or three of the neighbouring families dined with us yeſterday, among the reſt were Caroline and Lucerne; their mother not being quite well, was not of the party; they were the laſt that remained with us, and as it was a very fine clear evening, Caroline choſe to walk home with her brother and Charles, who offered to attend her. My mother, my aunt, and I, went with them as far as our gate; and after they had taken leave, ſtood chatting together there, when a poor miſerable ragged old woman came up to us, and earneſtly begged our charity; my mother, whoſe ears are always open to diſtreſs, and hands liberally employed in relieving it, took out her purſe and gave her ſomething directly; at which my aunt ſhook her head, and told her ſhe was very wrong to encourage ſtrangers to beg ſo near the houſe. The woman

woman muttered ſomething between her teeth, and as we were turning to go back, ſaid, ſhe hoped the young lady would be more charitable; "Do, my ſweet Miſs," ſaid ſhe, "do beſtow ſomething on me." She begged in ſuch a piteous manner, that I ſtept to the gate again, and gave her ſixpence: the old woman in reaching her hand to take it, ſlipt a paper into mine, and begged me not to ſhew it to the other ladies, but read it when I was in private. I gueſſed it to be a petition for ſomething further, put it in my pocket, and thought no more about it. Charles ſoon returned, and we went to ſupper: it never came into my mind when we retired, but this morning after breakfaſt, as I ſat down to write to you, and now recollected I had not opened the paper the beggar-woman gave me; I inſtantly therefore took it out of my pocket, and was greatly ſurprized to find my own name on the back, but much more ſo, when upon peruſing it, I found myſelf addreſſed in the warmeſt terms imaginable, by Lord Seagrave. I will not trouble you with all the angels and goddeſſes which are to be found in the contents; the purport of the letter however is, to beg my pardon for his late behaviour, which he imputes to having drank a little too freely; and at laſt has the aſſurance to deſire me to meet him privately, wherever I think moſt expedient, and the perſon that gave me that, would hover about Bellefield all the next day in expectation of a line from me. Did you ever, my love, hear of any thing more impertinent? 'tis ſurely very hard, not only to be debarred walking out, for I never now ſtir from our own grounds, without my brother or ſome of the gentlemen are of the party; but I muſt likewiſe, I find, ſhun the lawn in the front of the houſe. I have, however, through my dear mother's wiſe precautions, the back part left, there I can range ſecure from inſult and Lord Seagrave. You cannot

not think, my friend, how this epiſtle of his has hurt me; I am not conſcious of behaving in ſuch a manner as to have deſerved it. Can he think, as I find he has learnt who I am, that a woman of family, education, and under the eye of ſuch a parent as mine is known to be all over the country, would, like a little wanton, anſwer the ſtuff he has wrote me, appoint a meeting, and throw myſelf into his arms? No;—he knows not your Iſabinda. Was my affection to him as great as my averſion is, he would experience it a very difficult thing, to meet me in a clandeſtine way; but I hate, abhor, and loath the very name of him; he therefore will find it utterly impoſſible. I ſhall, however, not diſcloſe this ſecret to any body but yourſelf; and hope, when he ſees no notice is taken he will deſiſt all future attempts. I ſat down to tell you we are as uſual to go, a very large party next week to the D. aſſembly; it is the firſt this ſeaſon; and you know my aunt and mother always make it a point to be there; but this abominable letter entirely deranges me. I pray heaven the Portſdown family may not honour it with their company! A few days ago I was earneſtly wiſhing for a ſight of them; and I now as fervently deſire the contrary. Should the deteſted Seagrave—but what am I afraid of?—He certainly muſt dance with his intended bride; and am I not engaged to Sir William Balſton? Lucerne, you know, never performs in public. I ſhould have greatly preferred him for a partner, but he cannot bear the thought of one of his profeſſion friſking about at an aſſembly; though no one is fonder of the amuſement in private parties; he however attends us there; and I am ſure I have reaſon to be ſatisfied, as Sir William is a very genteel agreeable man, and an exceeding good dancer. Adieu, my love, and thank you for your laſt letter. May the calm you ſay ſtill continues, remain long uninterrupted.

LETTER LIII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

I TOLD you in my laſt, that we were this week to go to the D. Aſſembly; I now ſit down to give you, my deareſt Leonora, an account of the particular occurrences which paſſed that evening. We ſet out at the uſual time, and took Caroline in our carriage, my brother and Lucerne following us in his poſt-chaiſe; I found, as we were going, that Caroline was engaged to dance with Mr. Beverly, who, I can obſerve, is her very great admirer; I believe the regard is reciprocal, and truly hope one day or other, to ſee them united. I have often hinted to Lucerne a wiſh, that he would caſt a favourable eye on the eldeſt Welſted, who I am very certain is extremely attached to him, and yeſterday ſpoke openly on the ſubject; he called me cruel, and with a ſigh replied, "no Iſabinda, the man who doats like me, can never think of any other woman, while the only object of his choice remains unconnected; and ſhould ſuch an event happen, I am very certain, I could never find her equal, therefore it is not to be expected, my thoughts will ever turn on matrimony:" the melancholy look which attended theſe words, convinced me I had gone too far; exceedingly concerned at what I had done, I gave him my promiſe never to reſume the ſubject, and immediately changed the converſation; but the gloom which remained the whole day afterwards on his countenance affected me much; I have wandered entirely from what I was going to ſay, but your friendſhip for the worthy man I have juſt mentioned, will I know, induce you to forgive me. The ball-room was very near full when we arrived,

we

we therefore ſoon learnt to my great concern, that the Portſdown family were expected, and ſeveral chairs placed at the upper end of the room, convinced us of the truth of what we heard; Caroline and I contrived to draw my mother and aunt as far from the top as with propriety we could, and placed ourſelves on one of the benches behind them: in a very little time we heard a great buzz, and the Earl, his Lady, Lady Anne, Lady Louiſa, the vile Seagrave, and Saunders made their appearance; they walked to their places in a very ſtately manner, bowing and curtſying as they went to ſeveral of the genteeleſt people of the aſſembly; they therefore, I find, are not entirely unacquainted with every one in this forlorn place, (as Lord Seagrave terms it). Lady Portſdown is a fine comely looking woman for her years, and the Earl a truly venerable man, as to his appearance; Lady Anne, not at all handſome, but very pleaſing; rather low in ſtature, ſlender, fair and pale; Sir Thomas Wittol (who I forgot to mention) is a well-looking man in the common way, and as to Saunders, he is too deſpicable to be taken notice of. Colonel Sydney was not there; we learnt afterwards, that he ſet out for London the day before; but my attention was very ſoon called off from every one I have mentioned, by Lady Louiſa Werter; who was taken out by the maſter of the ceremonies, to begin the minuets with Lord Seagrave: I never in my life, Leonora, beheld ſo fine a figure; ſhe is very tall and ſlender, flat boſomed, which you know, I admire; her eyes are dark, and ever rolling about for admiration, her features uncommonly perfect, a beautiful brunetta as to her complexion, attended with ſo fine a bloom, that ſhe is univerſally ſaid to uſe art; the pretrieſt pouting lips I ever ſaw, and the fineſt falling ſhoulders: ſhe was dreſſed in a gold ſprigged muſlin and a great many diamonds on her head, neck and ears; ſhe is, in my mind, a moſt en-

chanting creature; though the critics at our part of the room, found out her head was much too ſmall in proportion to the reſt of her. Lord Seagrave was very fine, they were eſteemed a remarkably handſome couple, as they certainly are. I wonder what his Lordſhip thought when I was taken out, which was very early; for though the ladies uſually take place at theſe meetings you know, yet Sir William Balſton being a baronet, and deſiring to dance his ſecond minuet with me; as he was one of the firſt men there, had a reſpect paid him, which conduced to my appearance long before I ought, with propriety, to have made it. I am ſure Lord Seagrave could not have had the leaſt glance of me whilſt I remained in my ſeat, as I hid myſelf entirely behind my mother; you will not, perhaps, believe it, but Saunders had the aſſurance to aſk Nancy Welſted to dance country dances with him, but was refuſed in as diſdainful a manner as poſſible: he afterwards danced with Lucy Beverly; Lord Portſdown and Sir Philip being very well acquainted in London, at which, Caroline and I could not help ſmiling; the Welſteds with two gentlemen who live at D. and my brother, by his own choice, with Miſs Arnel. I believe Charles, ſince his adventure with Eſtifania, is a little afraid of beauty; for tho' Sir Thomas Wittol would have introduced him to the Portſdown family, and Lady Louiſa gave him ſeveral very condeſcending glances, he advanced no further than a low bow, a privilege he had a right to, without Sir Thomas, as he has often been in her company. But ſtay, ſurely Leonora, I have reaſon here to applaud my brother very much; you cannot have forgot my mother's prohibition, and that was certainly the cauſe of his backwardneſs to all of them. Lord Seagrave, I obſerved, took every opportunity when his partner's eyes were turned another way, to caſt ſignificant glances at me,

me, and every time we turned hands, honoured me with a gentle ſqueeze, which I always received with great contempt.—Adieu.

LETTER LIV.

LORD SEAGRAVE TO HUGH ARLINGTON, ESQUIRE.

I AM undone, Arlington, ſtark mad after the girl I mentioned to you in my laſt. Would you think that the little ſaucy gipſey, returned not the leaſt anſwer to a billet-doux I ſent her by Du Chaux, diſguiſed like an old beggar-woman; it is truth upon my ſoul, and here have I, ſince that, been tripping about with Louiſa at an aſſembly, only to rivet my chains more cloſely with the haughty fair one; it is all fact faith, a ball at D. was mentioned to the Earl, by Sir Philip Beverly, who immediately ſignified the wiſh of all our family's attending it. I, for my part, was never leſs in a dancing humour in my life; whether it was owing to the banging I received the evening I taſted Hyblean ſweets, the diſappointment I met with on the return of my valet, without a ſingle line, or the ſurfeit I have taken to Werter, I will not ſay, but every body elſe agreeing to it directly, I was, in a manner, forced to comply. It never once entered into my head, that my perverſe beauty would be there, and, by Jove, I cannot tell, why; the room was quite full before we arrived; minuets began ſoon after, and I had but juſt time to glance my eyes round, and ſingle out many good pretty girls, faith,

when Sir William Balſton, having led my ſiſter to her ſeat, was the happy man deſtined to perform next with my charmer. I believe I ſtarted when I firſt ſaw her, and the name of Aſhton, charming Miſs Aſhton! ſaluted my ears from divers parts of the room: I ſtood, for a little time, in a fixed poſture, gazing on her, but was rouzed by my father; "Seagrave," ſaid he, "you have a hawk's eye after beauty; know you that pretty girl who is now dancing, Aſhton, I think they call her;" "who I, my Lord," replied I, a little confuſed, "I; how is it poſſible I ſhould? your Lordſhip knows (ſtroking down my ruffles as I ſpoke) that I am quite a ſtranger in theſe parts," he ſhook his head and ſmiled; when happening to turn my eyes towards Lady Louiſa, who was ſitting on the other ſide, I perceived ſhe was greatly diſcompoſed; her pretty under-lip pouted ſtill more than common, ſhe caſt a look of diſdain at me, and I obſerved, notwithſtanding the rouge ſhe ſo plentifully puts on, that ſhe reddened with anger; therefore to avoid one of thoſe fracas which ſo often happen betwixt us, I changed ſides, and drew a chair directly behind her. I could then, you know, Hugh, view my angel, unobſerved by her Ladyſhip. "Pray, my Lord," ſaid ſhe, "do you know who that is now dancing?" "What the gentleman, you mean?" replied I. "Phoo, nonſenſe," returned ſhe, "you know I am acquainted with him, I mean the girl there." "Not I faith," ſaid I, ſhrugging up my ſhoulders; "do you think her pretty?" replied ſhe; "why upon my ſoul," returned I, (taking the opportunity of looking attentively at Miſs Aſhton) "very well, very tolerable indeed, conſidering the wilderneſs, we find her in; but my ſweet Louiſa," (turning to her and ſnatching her fan out of her hand, which I put before my face, endeavouring at a look of as much ſoftneſs as I could aſſume) "you know the moon has no eclat when

when the ſun is by:" this did my buſineſs directly; ſhe looked upon me with great complacency, and was very civil and good-humoured the whole evening: after the minuet was over, I could hardly remain where I was, ſo much did I wiſh to dance my fair one's ſecond with her; but decorum, for once in my life, nailed me to my ſeat, and Sir Samuel Bloomfield had the ſatisfaction of touching that lovely hand, gazing on that charming face, and viewing that bewitching form, without appearing particular: the encomiums on her, when led to her ſeat, were again very great. It was neceſſary to ſatisfy Louiſa's curioſity you know, I therefore aſked Beverly, who was at that time very near us, who ſhe was; he told me her name was Iſabinda Aſhton; and ſhe was reckoned the greateſt beauty in the county: I repeated his words to her ladyſhip, with a ſneering ſmile, which pleaſed her much. Iſabinda; a very pretty chriſtian name faith; upon my ſoul I am much better pleaſed with my godfathers and godmother, than I ever thought I ſhould have been: Adolphus and Iſabinda; why what a pretty love affair ſhall we make of it? by heavens, it is impoſſible in all your Caſſandras, Clelias, or any of the moſt famous romances, to find two names more ſuited to out of the way adventures than ours; and out of the way adventures they ſhall be, Arlington, for have her I muſt and will; not that I am diſpoſed to relinquiſh Werter's great fortune, on the contrary, I am determined to marry her; but Iſabinda muſt be mine, on ſofter, much more pleaſing terms, than matrimonial ſhackles: ſhe is herſelf the goddeſs of love; the graces attend her every ſtep, therefore by no means a fit object, to enter into a ſtate of hate and diſcord; but I will attempt a faint deſcription of her perſon, faint it muſt indeed be, for it is impoſſible, Arlington, to deſcribe the bewitching grace, which attends her every look and action. Iſabinda (my Iſa-

binda, I ſhould have ſaid) is not tall, (I hate an overgrown woman) neither is ſhe ſhort; ſhe is the exact height held forth to us, by the ſtatuaries, in their *Venus de Medicis*; which faith, wants only colouring and dreſſing to reſemble her much: the modeſty, the baſhful grace with which the goddeſs is there repreſented, ſhines peculiarly in the lovely maid I mention; ſhe is not in the leaſt inclined to fat, but notwithſtanding ſhe is very ſmall made, is rather plump than otherwiſe; ſpreading to the greateſt nicety from the bottom of her ſhape, to her lovely riſing boſom, and her hips, which are round and elegantly made, ſet off the ſlenderneſs of her waiſt to the greateſt degree; her neck is very long, which gives her an air about the ſhoulders impoſſible for you to comprehend; her arms delicately round, and the moſt beautiful ſhaped hand I ever ſaw; ſhe is finely limbed, and a remarkable pretty foot; her hair is very uncommon, but peculiarly charming; it is a ſort of brown auburn, without the leaſt tincture of red, and very much reſembles the colour of an hazel nut; her eye-brows and eye-laſhes of the ſame caſt, but darker; the one careleſsly circling, the other long and thick; which ſet off a pair of the fineſt light-blue eyes I ever ſaw, giving them all the fire of black, mixed with the ſoftneſs which ever attends their native colour; her noſe made in the exacteſt form; and her mouth and ruby lips are enchanting; particularly ſo, when in ſmiling, ſhe diſcovers the whiteſt, eveneſt ſet of ſmall teeth, you can imagine; her face is rather oval, but there is a roundneſs in her cheeks and chin, which is particularly beautiful, attended with dimples in both; her forehead, rather low than high, on which her hair deſcends in a little peak, which looks exceedingly pretty, and ſhe has the fineſt complexion I ever ſaw; the lily and the roſe are blended in her lovely face, in ſo juſt a mixture, that it is impoſſible for art to imitate it.

You

You know I am a very great critic, in regard to dreſs, I never ſaw any thing more elegant than her's: ſhe had on a ſilver-ſpangled ſpotted muſlin, with white luteſtring underneath; a kind of a tiara, (or band, if you pleaſe) of black velvet, intermixt with ſmall pearls, and little artificial flowers, ſeemed to confine the plume of white feathers, tipt with blue, which adorned her charming head; pearl earrings, and a great many rows of very ſmall pearl round her white neck, to which was faſtened, a very fine croſs of the ſame, which, as Pope ſays, "Jews might kiſs, and infidels adore;" for it lay upon the deep-plaited lace tucker, which hid her delightful boſom from the enquiring eye; a very fine noſegay of natural flowers, was placed on the left ſide, which never ſeemed to drop the whole evening, though ſituated where one would have thought they muſt have been ſcorched in an inſtant; but they were inanimate, Arlington, and knew not their own happineſs: a ſky-blue tiffany ſaſh, fringed with ſilver, tied with the greateſt negligence, wantoned lightly in the air as ſhe ſkimmed along; and a pair of white ſilver ſlippers, ſlightly ſpotted with blue, kept time in a moſt perfect manner, and with a gracefulneſs unequalled. Oh! Arlington ſhe muſt be mine. Farewel.

LETTER LV.

ISABINDA. TO LEONORA

The morning after we were at the aſſembly, a converſation paſſed while we were at breakfaſt, with which I ſhall acquaint my beloved friend, as I know

know ſhe intereſts herſelf in every thing that concerns her Iſabinda. Charles began it by ſaying, that Sir Thomas Wittol was very deſirous of walking round our grounds at Bellefield, as (at the diſtance he had often viewed it (it appeared to him another Arcadia. My aunt looked very grave, but did not ſpeak: my mother ſhook her head, and after remaining a little time ſilent, aſked my brother what was his anſwer? "What I ſhould imagine" replied he, "will meet with approbation." I told him that as it was your wiſh to live retired, I did not think myſelf authorized (as I was only upon a viſit), to aſk any of my acquaintance to your houſe; that I was extremely ſorry I could not comply with his requeſt, and begged his excuſe for it. "What then, Aſhton," ſaid he, "you do not mean ſurely to drop the friendly intercourſe which has ſo long ſubſiſted betwixt us? at leaſt you will indulge me with your company at the Caſtle; Will you dine with us to-morrow?" I made anſwer, I was greatly obliged to him, but it was not in my power, as I was pre-engaged. "Well then" returned he, "the next day, the day after, or any day you will, only name the time."—"I was curſedly confuſed," continued Charles, "and the more ſo, as I really like the man: but at laſt ſtammered out ſomething; that it was your deſire, that I ſhould not abſent myſelf from our family but as little as poſſible; that I was an entire ſtranger to that he was in, and therefore, though it was ever a great pleaſure to me to be in his company, (which indeed it is), I muſt beg leave to decline the invitation." He ſeemed a little vexed, and ſwore it was very odd: he could not imagine how ſo elegant a woman as Mrs. Aſhton appeared to be, could like to be ſo particular; and was ſorry to find he was not to ſee me. "As I found I only ſunk deeper and deeper in the mire," concluded my brother, "I broke off the converſation as ſoon as I could. But my good Madam, will you permit me, in my turn, to aſk the reaſon

reaſon of the prohibition you have laid on me." My mother ſighed, and returned this anſwer: "Your behaviour, my ſon, in this reſpect, as well as every other, merits my praiſe;" (here Charles coloured): "it ought, I think, to compel me to openneſs on my part; I will therefore, with great ſincerity, give you my reaſons; I cannot like the character of Lord Seagrave well enough, to be happy at the time I know even you are in his company; but here," ſaid the amiable woman, taking hold of my hand as I ſat next her, "here is a ſtill greater, a much more ſuperior motive: Can you think, Charles, it could be my wiſh to throw attractions, ſuch as your ſiſter is poſſeſſed of, in the way of one of the moſt notorious rakes in town? what could be the end of it? engaged as he is to a very beautiful woman, and immenſe fortune, he never could have a thought of my Iſabinda in the matrimonial way; neither ſhould I wiſh it, were there not obſtacles that cannot be removed. I had heard his character long before you returned to England;" (here my brother's face was crimſoned) "You on your arrival here, confirmed the report; and the watchful eye of a mother, ever intereſted for her children, ſaw enough laſt night to convince her of the abſolute neceſſity of avoiding all commerce with him: if your friend Sir Thomas comes, my Lord comes too; therefore you muſt allow me to exclude them both." My brother made anſwer, that he diſliked Lord Seagrave as much as ſhe; that as he was himſelf one of the dancers, he could not ſay he had made any obſervations on his behaviour, but that his Lordſhip had ſeveral times addreſſed himſelf to him in a familiar ſtrain, which was always returned with a cold politeneſs on his part; and to alleviate her uneaſineſs, promiſed to give up the ſociety of Sir Thomas while he remained at Bellefield. Charles's manner of ſpeaking, I own, hurt me a little, (nettled, I ſuppoſe, at being kept from his friend), but I was greatly more ſo, when

he

he proceeded in theſe words: "If you think Iſabinda's attractions ſo great, Madam, that it is dangerous for a man even to look at her, and a part of the family are to be excluded from their friends on her account, why do you not marry her to ſome deſerving man? according to your thoughts of her, there muſt be many that would be happy to court her favor; and ſhe as well as myſelf would then be a little more at liberty." I burſt into tears. "Charles, ſaid I, "my dear Charles, how have I deſerved this from you! I am ſure the gifts of nature are not mine, to boaſt of; it is Lord Seagrave's profligacy, my mother fears, not any thing dangerous in my attractions." My mother again ſighed, and ſat motionleſs, with her eyes fixed attentively on my brother; there was ſomething in her expreſſive countenance which ſeemed to ſay, "ſurely I am not miſtaken in you;" while my aunt caſting a look of the greateſt indignation at him, ſpoke to him thus: "I cannot ſay, Charles, that I at all approve of your laſt ſpeech, nor the manner in which it is delivered; if you are blind to your ſiſter's attractions, the reſt of the world are not ſo, I promiſe you: beauty is a very dangerous thing, and I ſincerely wiſh ſhe had not ſo great a ſhare of it. My dear ſiſter is perfectly right in ſhutting her doors to ſuch a character as Lord Seagrave; and you are as perfectly ſo, when you imagine that many deſerving men would be ready to court her favor: ſhe has already had ſeveral offers, and ſome of them exceeding good ones, I aſſure you, but has hitherto declined all overtures that have been made her; and what will you ſay, Sir, if at this preſent time, one of the firſt men in this place wiſhes to be united to her?" "Yes, Iſabinda," ſaid ſhe, "Sir William Balſton has conceived the greateſt affection for you: he deſired his worthy mother to mention it to my ſiſter the afternoon we were there, which occaſioned our returning ſo late; and it was agreed among us, that as the aſſembly was ſo near, nothing ſhould

be

be ſaid of it till after that was over; and if you recollect, Sir William came himſelf the next day to aſk you to dance with him. Why that down-caſt look, my love; tell me, my ſweet girl, does what I have ſaid, meet with your approbation?" I own, Leonora, I was greatly confuſed; as the idea never entered into my head of Sir William Balſton's looking on me with ſo favourable an eye. I knew not what to ſay—this wayward heart of mine, my friend, has never yet had a wiſh to unite itſelf to any man; neither do I believe it ever will; and without ſuch a wiſh ariſes, I cannot think of giving my hand, not even to the worthy baronet now mentioned, though I think him a very agreeable man; for which reaſon, when a little recovered from my ſurprize, I replied, that I thought it would be time enough to give an anſwer when Sir William himſelf renewed the application, as perhaps the good old lady might have gone further in the affair than he wiſhed her to do. I ſaw my aunt was greatly diſſatisfied with my reply; but was relieved for that time, by Lucerne, who at the very inſtant entered the room; as he knows my mother's maxim is, that the regularity of the houſe is not to be interrupted by diverſions, and that however late our hour of retirment may be the night before, we always breakfaſt at the uſual hour the next morning, he caſt a look of ſurprize at the breakfaſt things not being removed; and then turning to us, ſurveyed every one with great earneſtneſs, "For heaven's ſake," ſaid he, "what does all this mean? Mrs. Aſhton looks grieved." "You, Madam," to my aunt, "ſeem greatly irritated; Iſabinda has been in tears, and Charles appears I cannot tell how. Tell me, I conjure you, tell me what is the matter!" "Only a fit of the ſullens," replied my aunt, "Lucerne, which that gentleman (pointing to my brother), has choſe to fall into, becauſe my ſiſter, wiſhing to exclude Lord Seagrave from this houſe, deprives him of the company of his friend Sir Thomas."

Thomas." "And is that the reaſon," ſaid Lucerne, "of Miſs Aſhton's tears!" and he ſpoke with great quickneſs. "No, I promiſe you" anſwered I, as quickly, "that it is not." His eyes ſparkled at my reply, and addreſſing himſelf to my aunt, "I am ſure, Madam, Captain Aſhton ought to think himſelf greatly obliged to his worthy mother for ſuch an excluſion; I mean not to ſay any thing againſt the Baronet, who I have always heard well ſpoke of; but his Lordſhip is by no means fit company for his ſiſter, or himſelf either, to my knowledge: but come, Charles," continued he, "a walk this fine day will be of benefit to you after your laſt night's exerciſe; and I ſee it is highly proper we ſhould diſcuſs this point by ourſelves." My brother roſe from his ſeat with a very gloomy air; but the amiable Lucerne, may with propriety, be called his guardian angel; and he has ſuch an aſcendance over him, that though Charles tenderly loves my mother, ſhe can do nothing with him, (comparatively ſpeaking) to that excellent man. He therefore followed him directly: when they were gone, my mother renewed the ſubject my aunt had juſt mentioned to me; I then begged, ſhould any thing farther be ſaid, that a denial might be immediately given. "You ought, at leaſt, to let us know your reaſon, Iſabinda," replied my aunt, "is there any thing you diſlike in the gentleman now propoſed to you" "I cannot ſay I have any diſlike, Madam; but I do not find myſelf inclined to any partiality." She was very angry, and called me a perverſe creature; but my dear mother inſiſting upon my being left to my own choice, I have again conquered! and Sir William a day or two after received a diſmiſſion, which, however, at my requeſt, does not hinder his ſtill viſiting here.

ISABINDA in continuation.

Lucerne returned in a full hour before my brother, who, he ſaid, had taken up a book, and was reading in the ſummer houſe; he left him chearful and compoſed, after a very great altercation had paſſed betwixt them. My brother it ſeems imagined he ſhould conquer my mother's averſeneſs, and dine at the Caſtle; he appeared at firſt greatly diſappointed, at not having prevailed. "He ran on," ſaid Lucerne, "a great while, about his ſiſter, What was there to be ſo much afraid of, his mother ſeemed to think her ſomething very extraordinary; ſhe was well enough to be ſure, paſſable; but he could not for the life of him ſee any thing ſo charming in her, and a great deal of that ſort: I perceived that jealouſy was mingled with diſappointment, and told him I was very ſorry to ſee a mind like his, give way to the meaneſt of all paſſions; and what to my notion might even be called a crime; for though not in itſelf one, the dangerous conſequences which often aroſe from it, made it ſo: that his mother had the tendereſt regard for both her children, and I was very certain her affection was to the full as great for him, as his ſiſter; "I am not at all ſurpriſed, Aſhton," continued I, "at your inſenſibility of Iſabinda's beauty; in the firſt place you are her brother; but if that was not the caſe, ſhe is by no means ſuited to your taſte; for charming as ſhe is, ſhe is not an Eſtifania; modeſty, my friend, modeſty being her greateſt, her moſt bewitching attraction; he flew into a violent paſſion, called me ill-natured, cruel and moroſe; unheedful of him I ſtill went on; and for what purpoſe, Charles, do you wiſh to dine at the Caſtle to day? do you want again to appear as great a beaſt, as met my eyes, the night I found you ſo inebriated at Richmond? Lord Seagrave never lets any gueſt

return

return from him, in their proper ſenſes; his pleaſure, his whole delight, is, to intoxicate one ſex, and delude the other; and ſurely, Aſhton, you have ſuffered enough by both; he ſtamped, he tore about, ſaid I was inhuman to remind him of errors, he had long repented of: "Yes," replied I, "till a new temptation falls in your way; witneſs ſince you have been here this laſt time, Patty Simpſon, the miller's pretty daughter, a fine ſcrape you would have got into there, if it had not been for me; and was you now to have your wiſh indulged, you would again be in the continued ſtate of intoxication, from which I relieved you at Richmond; Aſhton, you are a very unſteady fellow, and are only tolerably good, when well looked after, you are not to be truſted by yourſelf a ſingle moment, and deſerve to be chained like a madman, for fear of deſtruction. You find, madam, I was very angry with him, he at laſt began to ſoften, owned himſelf in the wrong, and ſaid he was very ſorry for his behaviour, particularly to his ſiſter." My aunt then aſked Lucerne (for by the converſation you muſt have found, they were alone) what he meant by the miller's daughter. "I will tell you that ſtory as candidly as poſſible," replied he, "about a month or ſix weeks after Charles returned, I obſerved three or four mornings running, when we took a ride to any of the neighbours, that he invented ſome excuſe or other, not to go in with me, and rode away. I let him do ſo the times I have mentioned, but the fourth morning ordered our ſervants to ſtay where they were, till my return, and rode after him directly. He took his way to the mill, I followed him, and ſaw him tie his horſe to a gate behind the houſe, I did the ſame; he went in, and a few minutes afterwards I made my appearance. I ſuppoſe they did not dare to go into the parlour, for fear the miller ſhould come upon them unawares, the back way from the mill, where he is always buſy of a morning; for I found them both

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in the kitchen; which was very nice, and ſet entirely to rights. Upon one of the wooden chairs ſat Patty, dreſſed extremely neat; her light brown hair was combed exceeding bright, and turned up under her muſlin round eared cap, which looked as white as ſnow. Her ſtraw bonnet, (not uſually worn but of Sundays, I believe) decked with cherry coloured ribbons, was ſet on one ſide; her flowered linen gown looked as if very lately come out of the waſh, and the reſt of her linen, though coarſe, exceeding clean. Her handkerchief croſſed very neatly, and her white apron tied round her waiſt, in a right manner. She had little robins on, the whiteneſs of which ſerved only, to ſhew arms, tanned as red as crimſon; and her face naturally of a good colour, from being in the fields ſo changed, that ſhe might very well be called the nut brown maid, ſhe looked, however, very innocent and pretty, and her little hazel eyes were fixed with great pleaſure on your nephew, who ſat in another wooden chair cloſe to her. He had his regimentals on, and had taken off his cockaded hat, and laid it on the dreſſer; one arm was round the chair the pretty laſs ſat in, his hand upon her ſhoulder; whilſt the other hand which looked as white as could be, (comparatively ſpeaking to the maiden's,) had hold of hers. He was whiſpering ſomething in her ear, which where I ſtood, did not reach me, I therefore endeavoured to draw a little nearer, and in doing ſo, was diſcovered by them; they ſtarted up, and looked greatly confuſed. "So, Charles," ſaid I, "is it thus you lately paſs your mornings; you have, I muſt own, a very pretty excuſe for declining my company; I wiſh to heaven, our party was to receive the addition of Roger Simpſon, I give you my word, Aſhton, he would cudgel you well; for he would mind a gentleman no more than a plough boy, if he found out the errand you came on I aſſure you; and you, Patty," ſaid I, turning to her, "are you not aſhamed of yourſelf, for being

being ſo baſe to Ralph Watkins, the young farmer that courts you? you know your father intends it a match, and a very good one it is for you; but do you think if Ralph had caught you ſitting ſo cloſe to this fine gentleman, that he ever would have come a courting more; take my advice, my good laſs, go to your buſineſs directly: I dare ſay you have enough to do; and do you hear, before you begin, either pull off that bonnet, or put it in a poſition you ought to wear it; what would father ſay, if he was to come and find you dizened out as you are; I am ſure you do not dare to come with him to church on Sundays, with your head all awry." The laſs began to whimper a little, ſaid ſhe did not know how it was, but the gentleman would come; ſhe was ſure they had done nothing wrong, and dropping me a curtſey, begged me not to tell Ralph, and ſhe would never ſee his honor more, that ſhe would not; I promiſed to comply with her deſire, at which ſhe cheared up, wiped her eyes with her apron, and we came away: took our horſes from the gate, and rode in queſt of the ſervants I had left behind. On our way, I ſaid all I could to convince your nephew, how heinous a crime it was, to ſeduce a young maid, who but for him had been contented in her humble ſtate; and had he ſucceeded (which he certainly would, if I had not prevented it,) muſt have ever after, paſſed a life of miſery and wretchedneſs. "I know," ſaid I to him, "Simpſon well, had he found that his daughter was ruined, and by you, your life perhaps, in ſome way or other, would have been the price of it; and he would have turned her out of doors directly, and left her to ſtarve for him. The girl is really going to be well diſpoſed of, why ſhould you wiſh, not only to debar her of every proſpect in this life, but in all likehood, doom her to eternal wretchedneſs, in that which is to come?" He ſeemed greatly affected with my arguments; gave me his ſolemn promiſe never to go after her again, which I am certain he ſtrictly kept to; and I had laſt week

week the ſatisfaction of marrying Patty to young Ralph; ſhe appeared very chearful, and took an opportunity to thank me for taking the fine gentleman from her. Adieu.

LETTER LVI.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

WHEN my brother returned, I perceived a very great difference: his countenance was brightened, and he endeavoured in a very pleaſing manner, to atone for what he had ſaid; he took hold of my hand two or three times; "you are not chearful to day," ſaid he; "Iſabinda, I hope nothing I have ſaid is the cauſe of it." I gave him my word it was not, and could truly ſay ſo: alas! my valuable friend, I have ſuch a regard for him, that even his errors are pardonable in my eye; and as I attributed what paſſed in our laſt converſation, entirely to diſappointment, I was ſo far from thinking him wrong, that I ſhould have thought upon reflection, it was extraordinary if he had not been a little petulant about it; I muſt own at firſt I was hurt at his manner and ſubſequent ſpeech; but indeed, Leonora, my ſpirits are greatly hurried about Lord Seagrave; ſhould he continue perſecuting me, I know not what I ſhould do; and the lowneſs, the very thought occaſions, was the reaſon of thoſe fears, not any fault of my brother's; the day paſſed off very well; my mother, whoſe ſtudy is in every thing ſhe can, to oblige her children, kept Lucerne with us to dinner; and two or three gentlemen in the neighbourhood,

as

as it was the day after the aſſembly, calling to enquire after us, ſhe likewiſe prevailed with them to ſtay; and my brother appeared by his manner, not in the leaſt to regret his being at home.——

What is to become of me, my friend? counſel me, adviſe me, as you were wont. This odious Seagrave—but I will tell you the occaſion of my uneaſineſs, and you will then find, I have cauſe for my fears. This morning the family being a good deal divided, as it was neceſſary for my brother to pay his partner a viſit, and my mother and aunt being employed in ſome way or other; I bethought myſelf, that ſome of the plants belonging to the green houſe wanted to be removed, as I had obſerved the little ones were ſhooting up ſo faſt, that it was proper to tranſplant them; you know I am very fond of this ſort of employment, I therefore turned my ſteps that way, and after having done what I thought neceſſary, ſeated myſelf by the table, and was going to take up a book I ſaw there, when to my very great ſurprize, I perceived a paper, folded up in form of a letter, cloſe by it, and looking at the direction, read to my ſtill greater amazement, "Adolphus to Iſabinda:" Iſabinda, ſaid I to myſelf; why this muſt be addreſſed to me, but who can this Adolphus be! I know no ſuch perſon; neither am I in the leaſt acquainted with the hand writing. I had at firſt an intention, not to have opened it; but the thought occurring, that perhaps it was ſome joke of my brother's, as I could not tell how it poſſibly could get there, but by him; I at laſt broke the ſeal; and looking firſt at the concluſion, beheld the deteſted name of Seagrave, joined to Adolphus; every flower of rhetoric which is to be met with (by what I have heard,) in the higheſt ſtile of romance, was there to be found; he had not cloſed his eyes ſince the fatal evening, he had ſeen me at the aſſembly: and ſhould certainly ſoon expire with the torments he laboured under,

under, if I afforded not a little relief: in ſhort, my dear, the letter is ſuch a parcel of bombaſt and nonſenſe, that I cannot repeat more of it; but it concludes a great deal in the ſame ſtile as the firſt; in wiſhing me to appoint any place, any hour, for him to throw himſelf at my feet. Surely the aſſurance of this man is unparalleled, thought I; and how does he to ſuppoſe, I am to return an anſwer! but perhaps he thinks I ſhall write a billet doux, and direct it to the Caſtle. I was muſing in this ſort, and conſidering in what manner it could come there, as I could not divine how it was poſſible but by enchantment; when one of the men whom I had ſeen before at work, at a little diſtance from me, came up to the green houſe to do ſomething to the vines on the outſide: notwithſtanding I was greatly chagrined, I had the preſence of mind to conceal the letter on his approach, and took up the book; but as I thought the man ſeemed to go about his work very awkwardly, I looked up to ſee what was the reaſon, and his face being turned towards me, I inſtantly recollected the countenance of the old beggar which had brought me the firſt. My preſence of mind entirely forſook me, (had it been you, my friend, your reſolution would have perhaps put an end directly to this diſagreeable perſecution;) I reflected afterwards how much I was to blame, but inſtead of treating the man as I ought to have done, and acquainting his employer by him, how unſucceſsful every attempt he made, muſt be; I gave a great ſcream, and Lucerne, who had not rode out that morning, juſt entered the garden: (having been informed I was there,) at the time, he ran directly to me, and earneſtly enquired what was the matter: I made no other anſwer, but a deſire of his attending me to the houſe, took hold under his arm, reached the hall, and ſitting down on the firſt chair I met with, burſt into tears. Oh! Leonora, had you ſeen the tenderneſs

of

of that excellent man, viewed the concern, the ſituation I was in occaſioned, you would I know have rebuked me for my indifference, to a ſtill greater degree than uſual. I was ſome time before I could ſpeak, but at length getting a little more compoſed, revealed every thing that had paſſed, and drawing the letter out of my pocket, deſired him to peruſe it. He ſtood for ſome time in mute aſtoniſhment! at laſt with great gentleneſs chid me for not having confided in him ſooner; he was going on when the head gardener came to the hall door, and told us that ſeveral of his men, being at work not a great way from where I was, having heard the ſcream, made what haſte they could, and ſeeing me led off by Lucerne, ſeemingly very much frightened they aſked the man what was the matter? and he not anſwering readily; one of them having looked him in the face, cried out to the reſt, "Why this is not Tom Cawdrey; they all therefore immediately," ſaid the gardener, "ſurrounded him, and taking him for a thief, carried him to the canal, and have ducked him ſoundly: I am therefore now come to know what your honor and Miſs would have done to him more." We could hardly help ſmiling, but having conſulted together, thought it beſt to let it paſs in the way the men took it; Lucerne giving the gardener a ſevere reprimand for his careleſſneſs, in admitting a ſtranger; he replied, "that Tom ſent word by the man that morning, that he was very ill, and could not come to work, but had ſent one that he was certain would do as well; I therefore, Sir, continued he, admitted him directly, as I am juſt at preſent in great want of hands." "But," interrupted Lucerne, "you will be ſo good I hope, notwithſtanding, to diſcharge Cawdrey entirely, as Mrs. Aſhton, I am certain, will never permit his working here again; and turn that other fellow out of the grounds immediately; the gardener promiſed

miſed he would do as he was ordered, but we heard afterwards, the men would not ſuffer him to depart, without a ſecond ducking; we agreed after he was gone, it would be beſt to conceal the affair from the family, what could my mother do, and her fears you find are greatly alarmed already. Lord Seagrave has certainly bribed this poor fellow, Lucerne intends to talk with him, as he in general bears a tolerable character, but what will not money do? Adieu, my deareſt love. Write ſoon.

LETTER LVII.

LORD SEAGRAVE TO MR. ARLINGTON.

By my ſoul, Arlington, this girl will be the death of me; I never met with ſo frozen an hard hearted fair one in all my life; and here am I diſappointed in all my ſchemes. Du Chaux, whom I ſent with another letter, came back in a moſt dripping condition; they had it ſeems ducked him well at Belleſield more than once: and I am for my own part, though not ſo ſeverely handled as on my firſt attempt, ſufficiently ill uſed to make any body but myſelf heartily ſick of my undertaking: but theſe difficulties only ſerve to make me more eager in the enterprize, as an eaſy purchaſe ſuits but ill, with the fire and ſpirit with which nature has endowed me; I will however relate to you what paſſed in my laſt interview with the charming Iſabinda, and I believe you will think, Hugh (with me,) that I was moſt ſcurvily treated. As it is in my power to write in any hand

hand I have a mind to, I thought I had laid my plan well, by entirely changing that in which I wrote my firſt epiſtle, and ordered Du Chaux to get into the grounds, (which he did by bribing a raw country fellow that works there,) and throw the letter in my angel's way, the firſt time ſhe appeared out of doors alone: he was then under pretence of being at work near, to obſerve her motions, and if poſſible to bring me an anſwer; but being foiled again, as I ſaid before, my next thought was to have drawn her brother to an intimacy, who is a very pretty fellow, faith, and a man of ſome ſpirit: but I was obliged to give up that, for two reaſons, the one was that Lady Louiſa Werter's fortune, (though not her perſon, beautiful as it certainly is,) would be a very agreeable acquiſition; mine, I am ſorry to ſay it, getting exceedingly deranged; and though faith I am in general thought a very handſome fellow, yet I was fearful as the captain is univerſally reckoned ſo too, he might have ſupplanted me: and the other was that he treated every overture I made him at the aſſembly, with great coldneſs, owing I am told, to a little ſmart cropt eared fellow of a parſon, of whom more by and by; who has a great aſcendance over him, is ſaid to be in love with the ſiſter, and a marvellous good friend, in the puritanical ſtile to the aforeſaid young captain. I therefore found nothing would do, (though Bellefield, like an enchanted place is ſo ſurrounded, that there is a moat and a drawbridge padlocked, an iron gate, which lets you into a wood, as ſoon as you have paſſed the bridge, trebly locked, and the devil knows what beſides,) but making my appearance in my own perſon there: for which reaſon I ſallied forth one morning, and ſurveyed the little ſtream which parts the village, from that delightful place, with the greateſt ſcrutiny; view'd the green bank on the other ſide, with ardent looks; and examined the hedge, which ſurrounded the

the wood, with eager enquiry: the fence appeared every where ſo ſtrong and thick, the green bank ſo ſteep, and the river though narrow, ſo deep, that I was upon the point of giving up that ſcheme alſo as impracticable, there being no other way to the grounds, but in the front of the houſe, and I well knew that would not do by any means. One would faith imagine whoever was the projector, had a preſentiment that one day or other a great beauty would find it neceſſary to be encloſed there, from the purſuit of ſuch an hell hound as myſelf; as every part of the grounds, except the front and back, are ſo fortified, they are inacceſſible: but what cannot that delightful thing called money do! I at laſt bethought myſelf that I had ſeen an honeſt carpenter in the village, who perhaps might aſſiſt my paſſage over to him, I went, and after ſounding him thoroughly, found him a man fit for my purpoſe; that is, ready to do any thing for the ſhining ore, provided he was certain of not being found out; which I promiſed him he ſhould not. The fellow then ſcratched his head, gave me a broad grin, and told my lordſhip, he believed he could do my buſineſs, if I was not afraid of being ſous'd: I told him I would rather wiſh to avoid that, but if there was no other way, I muſt ſubmit: "Pleaſe your honor," ſaid he, "the river is fordable, I am very certain, (as we have had very little rain lately,) in that part where the ſmall gothic temple is erected, in madam's wood; now if you could put on boots, and daſh acroſs the ſtream, I would paſs over firſt, carry any thing you wanted to new dreſs, upon my head; faſten a ladder, ſo as to help you up the bank, and when there, we could eaſily you know, ſet it up againſt the temple, and your worſhip could get in at the window next the water." "Faith, fellow," ſaid I, "you are very clever, and I do not ſee why walking acroſs the river in the man-

ner you mention, may not be quite as agreeable, as upon dry land; well honeſt man, when ſhall we go about it?" "Ay, there it is now," ſaid he, "you fine ſparks are in ſuch a woundy hurry about theſe things; it can't be done to day, nor to-morrow neither." "Why not," replied I, "Why quoth he, your honor's worſhip muſt know, that the worthy family at Bellefield, are plaguy careful; and when you are got to the top of the ladder, you can do nothing more than look in at the window, unleſs I firſt contrive to have it left open for you. Why, Lord, Sir," ſays he, ſhaking his head, "they are all faſtened down with ſprings, and bolts too." "Confound their cleverneſs," replied I, "they are likely to ſpoil the beſt ſcheme I ever had in my life." "Why, aye, ſaid he, ſhaking his ſides with laughter, "there it is again; you don't know, perhaps, that I am often employed for a whole day together, in carpenter's work about the grounds: it is too late to attempt any thing now; but to-morrow morning I will go as uſual with the other workmen; I warrant I ſhall find enough to buſy me all day there, and the window ſhall not be forgotten, I promiſe you, but it muſt be the laſt thing I do, for elſe ſomebody may come after me you know, and your honor's worſhip and I, may chance to dance over the ſtream for nothing." I was ready to hug the dirty dog, he delighted me ſo; a thought juſt then ſtruck into my head, and I aſked him if he was a ſmith, as well as a carpenter: for you know, Arlington, in theſe country places, the ſame perſon drives ſeveral trades at once. He anſwered in the affirmative: I replied, then I will add to your day's work, that of getting me keys of the padlock that faſtens the chain of the drawbridge and the iron gate; perhaps you will meet with ſome that will do without further trouble, but if not, you muſt contrive one way or other to do it. "Ay, ay, maſter," ſaid he,

he, "leave that to me, I can do that, I warrant it:" but again ſcratching his head and grinning, "has your worſhip thought of ſecuring a way back, for that will ſurely be neceſſary? You know the ladder muſt be taken away again by me, and the window ſhut down, you are then an entire priſoner that way, for I ſhall only ſtay till I can have the things you paſs the river in, and decamp immediately." The thought never occurred to me; by my ſoul Arlington, theſe low raſcals, when they are worthleſs, can teach their betters how to ſin with a vengeance. I ſhook my head: "Why now," ſaid he, "I ſuppoſe you imagined, as I dare ſay your honor is pretty well uſed to ſchemes, that this was eaſily gone about; but you find the contrary: I will ſhew you before I leave you, the way to a door, which I will give you a key of; that is bolted and barred too, but as it is of the inſide, you can eaſily compaſs opening it: It is behind the alcove, where Miſs ſo frequently ſits of a morning, to do her painting work, I think they call it; and the gardener's men uſually throw the rubbiſh out there, of an evening, that they have made in the grounds that day. It will carry you through ſome fields, if you keep to the right, which brings you to the lane, where (begging your honor's pardon) you was ſo drubbed one afternoon; but pray mind to lock the door after you, as the workmen will then think that ſome of them forgot to bolt and bar it, and you will not be found out." I aſked him why he could not let me in there, he anſwered it was impoſſible; as the men were always at work in that part of the grounds, before breakfaſt; in order that they might not diſturb the young lady, if ſhe choſe to ſit in the alcove after the day was further advanced; and had often that very door open, upon ſome occaſion or other at that time: This then was at laſt agreed on; and you find, Hugh, I was now informed not only

how to act, but of the very ſpot to ſeek my charmer in. We parted ſoon after; and the next evening I took an opportunity of ſtealing again to my friend, the carpenter, who acquainted me every thing was in readineſs; I therefore fixed the morning following, as ſoon as it was light, for the enterprize. The difficulty was how to get out of the Caſtle; but that was conquered by telling the Earl that I had an engagement which would call me forth very early; that I hoped to return to dinner, but if not, ſhould certainly be with him in the evening at furtheſt. I ordered Du Chaux to pack up a compleat dreſs for me, and to be in readineſs to attend me on horſeback by the dawn of day. We ſet forth, and after having rode to the water ſide, I ordered him to leave me, and take the horſes to the lane the carpenter had mentioned, and lead them ſome where thereabouts till my return. As he is uſed to my exploits he gave me a ſignificant look, and ſaid he would obey my commands. I gave him my coat which would have been rather cumberſome in my paſſage, and he rode away, leaving me with honeſt Dick Springle, the carpenter, whom we found at the brink of the river; he is tall as well as myſelf, and having faſtened a rope to the ladder, daſhed acroſs the ſtream (as he had before expreſſed himſelf) trailing it after him; and gained the other ſide with very little difficulty, conſidering one hand was employed in that manner, and the other ſupported the little bundle, containing my cloaths on his head; you muſt therefore think I walked through with great eaſe; but faith, Arlington, the river at the deepeſt part was up to my neck, and unuſed to ſuch a paſſage on foot, I began to be heartily frightened; but it ſoon getting ſhallower, I in a ſhort time ſet my foot on the firſt ſtep of the ladder, placed as before-mentioned, crept up the bank in that manner, and afterwards to the temple; Dick ſhewing me the way each time, and lifting up the

ſaſh

ſaſh received me ſafe there. I dreſſed directly after I had dryed myſelf, having ordered Du Chaux to put up towels for that purpoſe. The carpenter took the things I had pulled off, and after ſhewing me the way, gave me the key of the door behind the alcove, and laughing heartily as he ſhut down the window, wiſhed me a happy deliverance. The ſprings cloſed of themſelves, and I took care to faſten the bolts by his deſire. I ſtaid where I was for ſeveral hours, as it would have been dangerous to have made my appearance till after nine, but found enough to amuſe me in this ſecond Eden, for a moſt charming place it is; but I ſhall not attempt a deſcription of it, will, therefore, only ſay, that having ſtrolled about the woods for ſome time, Springle having told me I was perfectly ſafe there, I re-entered the temple, and taking a book from off one of the ſhelves where there were many placed, ſet myſelf down and read, till the great clocks both at the Caſtle and Bellefield, warned me, that it was time to depart. It was a good while before I arrived at the alcove, for as far as I can gueſs, it is about the midway from the wood to the houſe, and the grounds are rather extenſive: I at laſt, however, purſuing the carpenter's directions, got there, and found the door exactly as he had deſcribed it; after I had taken a view of the very different beauties which now ſurrounded me, I hid myſelf behind the alcove, on the oppoſite ſide from the door, I could then ſee a great way before me, without being obſerved. The labourers firſt returned, and went into a diſtant part of the grounds; and in about half an hour after, appeared the goddeſs herſelf: ſhe croſſed a parterre of flowers, with gravel walks intermingled, and with a chearful tread and blooming innocence, ſeated herſelf on the middle bench before the table in the alcove, which is a very elegant white building, ſupported by ſtone pillars (remarkably prettily ornamented) in front and of the ſides; it

is cloſe behind, and adorned all round the back of the inſide with the moſt curious paintings; the ceiling of the ſame ſort, remarkably fine; Apollo and Daphne the ſubject, who fled from the God, and was purſued by him in the ſame ardent manner as Seagrave follows his Iſabinda. A pale green curtain with white fringes hung in feſtoons betwixt each pillar, ready to be let down wherever the ſcorching heat of the ſun prevailed, and a beautiful black and white marble, ſet round with pots of flowers, formed the pavement. The goddeſs of this delightful place having opened a drawer and taken out her papers, began her work; ſometimes her charming eyes were caſt up to the ceiling, her lovely arm reſting on the green and white bench on which ſhe ſat, at other times ſhe rapidly went on with her painting; till turning her beautiful face haſtily towards the corner where I ſtood, ſhe perceived me gazing on her, gave a faint ſcream, and let fall her pencil. I inſtantly ran and threw myſelf at her feet, when, inſtead of thanking me, (as you know, Arlington, ſhe ought to have done) for all the perils I had encountered for this interview, ſhe called me a deteſtable wretch, an impertinent troubleſome creature; and made uſe of a great many other epithets equally as kind. And do you think, my fair one, you ſhall eſcape for this cruelty! no, my ſweet Iſabinda, I will be revenged ere long, and amply ſo, for all the ſufferings I have experienced on your account. But to return, I made no anſwer to theſe invectives; (harmleſs creature as I am), nay, inſtead of any injurious retaliation, I only kiſſed the dear little hand, (which as I knelt,) I held faſt cloſed in mine; ſhe ſtruggled to get looſe. "What can you mean, my Lord," ſaid ſhe, "by theſe inſults; were you as free as air, I never would be yours; but are you not contracted, bound to fulfil an engagement which ought to be held inviolable, with one of the moſt beautiful of her ſex? I declare by every thing that is ſacred, if you ſtill go on perſecuting

ſecuting me in this manner, I will acquaint the family at the Caſtle with your proceedings. How can you, Sir, behave ſo, to one who is happy enough to have relations (of no mean birth) ready to riſe in her defence?" Nothing will do, upon my ſoul, Arlington, but force. "And why," returned I, "my ſweeteſt, deareſt Iſabinda, why theſe dreadful reproofs? look more kindly, my love!" riſing and ſeating myſelf by her, "on the moſt faithful, the moſt ardent of all your ſlaves." While I ſpoke, I took care to caſt my eyes all round, and not perceiving a ſingle creature, neither the way the charmer came, nor in the broad graſs walk which fronts the alcove, I ventured to claſp her round the waiſt; ſhe gave a ſcream loud enough to be reſounded by the diſtant hills which terminate that walk; and in an inſtant the before-mentioned parſon, followed by three or four of the gardener's men, iſſued from a ſhady walk on one ſide the graſs one; which I had not before taken notice of, as the trees are ſo cloſe on each ſide, and at the top, that the rays of the ſun are totally impervious. He ſtalked up to us with a very majeſtic air, and ordering his followers to ſtop on the outſide, approached us directly. "How did I dare," ſaid he, "to encroach on the grounds belonging to my neighbours, and violate each law, and every rule, which even the meaneſt man (if honeſt) would hold ſacred." Unuſed to be addreſſed in this way, I anſwered with ſome warmth, that I thought he had no buſineſs to meddle in my affairs, and aſked him if he knew who he was ſpeaking to." "Yes," replied he, with a diſdainful ſmile, "too well, Lord Seagrave; your inſolence to this young lady has (no more than your perſon been a ſecret to me, for ſome time paſt); I ſhall perhaps as peace ought to be the characteriſtic of my function, let you depart this time unmoleſted, but beware the future; for ſhould I ever again meet you in theſe grounds, neither my clemency, nor your rank and title, ſhall protect

protect you;" the diſappointment I had again met with, and his haughty behaviour, threw me into a paſſion; "The word inſolence, Mr. what do you call um," ſaid I, "is by no means, a proper term to make uſe of, to one in my ſituation in life, and you are a pert jackanapes for your pains; I think the rank and title you have juſt mentioned, ought to ſecure me from ſuch rudeneſs, particularly, from one ſo very much my inferior." What do you think, Arlington, he had the impudence to anſwer me? "When men of birth and fortune ſtoop to debaſe themſelves by diſhonourable practices, I not only reckon myſelf their ſuperior, but think the meaneſt of thoſe peaſants (pointing to the men that ſtood there), infinitely above them: but why do I hold parley with you? My Lord, you are beneath my notice! how you got in I know not; but of this I am very certain, that you will be indebted to my protection for your exit." Then turning to his followers, he bade them put me out at the ſame door he ſhould ſuppoſe I muſt have entered at. One of the men made anſwer that it was impoſſible I could, as he himſelf had bolted and barred it before he left the grounds that very morning, and it remained exactly the ſame: "but if you pleaſe, Sir, I think we had better ſerve the gentleman as we did the thief the other day. Pray now your honor, let us have him to the great canal, and ſouſe him well." The three other fellows joined heartily in the petition, ſwearing it would be good ſport; and were going to approach me, but the parſon ſtopping them, with a commanding air replied, "By no means, my honeſt men; though Lord Seagrave richly deſerves the puniſhment, it would ill become one of my profeſſion to ſuffer it; take hold of him, and lead him out at the door behind the alcove; but firſt ſearch him, we may then perhaps find in what manner he has had the aſſiſtance to make this vile attempt." You will think, Arlington, I am greatly changed, when I tell you I

ſuffered

ſuffered them to obey the parſon without reſiſtance, particularly as I had the key Springle gave, about me; but as I had ſecured it very ſafely, I ſubmitted without the leaſt repugnance, in order to bewilder them the more. Before I left the temple I reflected, that perhaps my expedition might prove unſucceſsful, and the key be found upon me: I therefore united the black ribbon which faſtens poor Peggy Langdale's picture round my neck, ſtrung it on, and again tying it, threw both afterwards at my back, and they never thought of looking for it there, as you may imagine. A qualm of conſcience, Hugh, (unuſed as I am to remorſe), ever comes acroſs me when I think on Peggy. Upon my ſoul, that was a moſt ſhocking affair:—and then her expiring agonies; doomed to death in the very bloom of life; and doomed to it by my ill-timed advice; but how could I help it? I meant not to deſtroy her; and if the fatal draught ſtruck the mother inſtead of the infant, I am not to blame, you know. But to return;—As ſoon as the ſearch was over, I told them, I ſhould not ſo patiently ſubmit to their parſon's next command; and ſet myſelf againſt the back of the alcove, in a poſture of defence, but did not perceive, as I turned for that purpoſe, that one of the ſly countrymen had thrown a cord acroſs me, and by that means nooſed my arms quite down. I gave them all a hearty curſe, particularly their leader, and without taking leave of the trembling Iſabinda, who panted like a little bird juſt eſcaped from the ſnare; walked, or rather to ſay, was towed forward by my four conductors: but they did not ſtop here, for after they had got me out of the grounds, they tumbled me among the new-mown graſs, which, as it lay in the ſhade, continued ſtill wet with the morning dew, and heaped piles of ſand, dirt, and all ſorts of rubbiſh on me. Corded as I was, it was impoſſible for me to make the leaſt reſiſtance, I therefore bellowed like a bull juſt going to be ſlaughtered,

which

which brought the parſon to my relief. He could not help ſmiling at the condition I was in when I aroſe. I had a white coat on, Hugh, and the different ſort of things they had roiled me in, muſt, I ſuppoſe, have given me the appearance of ſomething ſet out with coloured ſugar plumbs, for a deſſert; but the green ſo greatly predominated, that I was forced to ſtay till Du Chaux, whom I met at the appointed place, ſlipt ſome other habiliments out of the Caſtle, and dreſſed in a field. As it is impoſſible for me ever to wear the coat more, I therefore could not appear before the Earl in it.

LETTER LVIII.

ISABINDA TO LEONORA.

THANK you, my love, for your laſt letter, it afforded me all the conſolation I am at preſent capable of; the deteſted Seagrave has again perſecuted me; indeed my friend, I am fearful it will turn out a moſt ſerious affair; think what a confuſion your Iſabinda muſt have been in, when ſitting yeſterday, in the alcŏve, at my favourite amuſement, I happened to turn my head towards the garden, and my eyes met thoſe of that wretch, fixed on me, in a manner that almoſt frightened me out of my ſenſes: I know not what would have enſued, if Lucerne, and ſome of the gardener's men hearing my ſcreams, had not run to my aſſiſtance. After a little altercation, which you muſt naturally ſuppoſe, aroſe; he was turned out at the door behind the alcove: we cannot find out how

how he came in; he was ſearched, but nothing found about him: oh! how the brutal monſter ſwore; what dreadful imprecations did he make uſe of in parting, to Lucerne; who, calm and placid as poſſible, ſaved him afterwards from the inſults of our labourers: after he departed, Lucerne ſoothed me in the tendereſt manner; it ſeems, I did not owe my eſcape to chance, no, Leonora, I am indebted for it to that excellent man's accuſtomed aſſiduity. My brother and he were going to ride to Sir James Arnel's, (where indeed the former now ſpends moſt of his mornings,) ſoon after they had turned into the lane, at the bottom of our avenue, they perceived two ſaddle horſes, tied by the reins to a gate, on the inſide of a field, and ſtopping to learn the reaſon of it, ſaw at a little diſtance, a man (whom Lucerne knew to be Lord Seagrave's valet) under the hedge, lying faſt aſleep; my brother, not knowing who he was, made no obſervations upon it, and Lucerne, very ſoon after, left him, under ſome pretext or other, and returned directly to Bellefield; as he was apprehenſive of what was really the caſe. He was informed where I was, but not being certain if his conjectures were true, thought it beſt to come through the little retired walks, and in his way, meeting ſome of the gardener's men, ordered them to attend him: as ſoon as he turned into the great ſhady walk, the firſt think that ſtruck him, was Lord Seagrave, kneeling before me; he ſtood ſome time where he was, but the wretch's rudeneſs and my ſcreams, at length brought him to us: when I was a little recovered, I begged him to accompany me over the grounds; we ſearched every part, looked in each place, where there was the leaſt probability of his entering, but not a trace of him could be found; nay even the wood did not eſcape our enquiry, nor the ſummer-houſe upon the mount at the end of the broad graſs walk: but all was faſt, all locked

locked and bolted. "I cannot," ſaid Lucerne, "imagine where this infamous man could have found entrance; I think I can anſwer for the honeſty of your gardener, and, indeed, every one of his men; (I had not, it is true, the higheſt opinion of Cawdry,) but the reſt, I am very certain, though poor, are not capable of being bribed, and their maſter is one of the beſt of beings:" I told him, I had threatened Lord Seagrave that I would acquaint his family; "Alas," ſaid he, "my dearеſt Iſabinda, what would that avail? the Earl could only rebuke him for his miſdemeanour; impatient of reſtraint, and careleſs of controul, the haughty Lord can never feel convicted; and his father, anxious for the purpoſed treaty taking place, would, at this juncture, though a worthy man, as little notice your complaint as poſſible: your mother and aunt could not long remain ignorant of his perſecutions, and your brother's life, through warmth of temper, and family pride, would be again in danger; your delicate ſenſibility and fears, might, perhaps, be turned into ridicule, even by Lord Portſdown, who has been, in his youth, a gay man himſelf; (though not in that reprehenſible manner as his ſon;) he would moſt likely ſhake it off with a ſmile, and ſay, who would not leap over hedge and ditch too, to look at ſo pretty a maid as you are; for indeed, my ſweet Iſabinda," continued he, "you know that is, very near, all you can accuſe Lord Seagrave of, this time: no, my fair one, take my advice, let this adventure paſs in ſilence; it is hard to deny you air and exerciſe, but, for the future, your walks muſt be limited within ſight of the houſe, and if he again ventures to tranſgreſs, I give you my ſolemn promiſe, I will myſelf acquaint the Earl of it;" here ended our conference. I ſhall certainly follow his advice; but, oh, my friend, ſomething tells me, this man will be a dangerous neighbour, if not fatal to your Iſabinda. Adieu.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.